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**THE ROLE OF WOMEN
IN
THE FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY IN AFRICA***

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* The views expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Secretariat of UNIDO. This document has not been edited.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

In Africa, women traditionally carry out 80 percent of agricultural production, food processing as well as preservation, and provide 60 percent of agricultural labour. Because of this traditional and significant role of women in the food production cycle, food processing industries represent one of the sub-sectors which women enter with relative ease. Food processing industries are of major importance to African countries as they constitute, *inter alia*, a fabric for self-reliant and sustainable development through linking agriculture with industrialization.

Although there are variations among African countries with regards to their levels of economic, social and political development, African women in the food-processing industry commonly face gender-specific constraints in addition to the other constraints that are faced by any entrepreneur such as lack of a high-quality crop input, inadequate infrastructure for transportation of the product, packaging problems, lack of storage facilities and efficient marketing structure. These constraints have to be redressed in order to strengthen the sector and maximize the participation of women in it. Problems of access to credit, technology, training and information are among the major obstacles women face. While food-processing industries are generally major employers of women, women's employment conditions, access to training and advancement to supervisory positions are limited.

UNIDO has a strong mandate for the integration of women in industrial development and adopted a Programme and Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Industrial Development for the period of 1990-1995 to ensure that women are more fully integrated in operational activities as well as in policy, and study and research programmes, so that they are equal beneficiaries in all programmes and projects. The Plan of Action spelled out the need to organize expert group meetings (EGMs), and seminars on women in industrial development, in order to discuss specific issues and strategies for the advancement of women in industry and to sensitize policy makers to these issues.

UNIDO has previously held an EGM on Women in Agro-Industries whose report was submitted to the Eighth Conference of African Ministers of Industry, held in Bujumbura, Burundi, 17-19 September 1989. This conference subsequently called upon UNIDO to organise follow-up activities in the form of an African regional expert group meeting to define a programme specifically aimed at assisting African women in overcoming the constraints hampering their full contribution to industrial development, particularly in food processing industries.

This study constitutes part of the background materials for the EGM on women and food processing industries in Africa that UNIDO is organising in line with the above mentioned mandate. The EGM is scheduled to take place in Arusha, Tanzania, from the 17th - 20th of January 1994.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study constitutes part of UNIDO's background documentation for the EGM. The study analyses women's current role and status in the food processing industries in Africa, the constraints that they face in this sub-sector both as entrepreneurs and employees, and advises on strategies to best target women within UNIDO-supported projects and programs.

1.3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

Broadly the Terms of Reference for this study are;

- to identify women's involvement in the food processing sector on the basis of an assessment of women's role, participation patterns and assistance needs;
- to identify specific obstacles and constraints to women's participation in the food processing sector and to discuss how this will affect their participation in industrial development

- on the basis of the above, elaborate recommendations on how to upgrade women's involvement in the food processing sector, and to propose specific measures which can ensure that women will be targeted and benefit from UNIDO's programmes of technical co-operation and specific projects in this sub-sector.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report covers 9 sections as per the following major headings:

- Role and Status of Women in the Food Processing Sub-Sector.
- Factors affecting Women's Participation in the food processing industry.
- Constraints faced by Women in the Food Processing Industry both as Entrepreneurs and Employees.
- Appraisal of the Policy for Women's Advancement, its main focus and Sectoral Priorities and its linkage with Industrial, economic, and general development.
- The Institutional Framework.
- Current and new Women's Food Processing Activities for which women should be prepared through measures and activities such as training, promotion policies within firms, services to support entrepreneurs and research and development programs that look at women's role as producers and consumers.
- Recommended Strategies for Reaching Women as a special target group in the Food Processing Industry within specific UNIDO projects.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This study is based on secondary data and information collected during a mission which focused on consultations with relevant staff from UNIDO headquarters in Vienna, the ECA and the African Training and Research Centre for Women (ATRCW) and the Women in Development Unit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa, the WID unit of the African Development Bank in Abidjan. During stop-overs in Addis Ababa and Abidjan, consultations were also made with several relevant bi-lateral and multi-lateral regional and national institutions as well as individuals knowledgeable about the food processing industry and industrial development patterns and trends within Africa.

The mission covered the period, 11th September to 9th October 1993.

1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One major limitation of this study is the absence of empirical gender-disaggregated statistical information on the role and status of women in food processing industries, especially participation rates in both formal and informal sectors as both entrepreneurs and employees, occupational and income levels, and ownership patterns. Statistical information is also not available with respect to the number of women in the food processing sub-sector who have benefitted from credit from various sources as well as training, particularly from the institutions that are responsible for small enterprise development throughout the African continent.

1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Informal Sector

Informal sector is a term originated by an ILO mission to Kenya in 1972, to refer to productive activities that take place in very small scale units, producing and distributing goods and services that typically involve limited monetary exchange or value. These units use low-level technology and skills for which little or no training is

required and are therefore operating at a limited level of productivity and generally yield minimal and irregular income. Precisely, these are activities which operate outside the formal, structural economy.

Formal Sector

Formal sector refers to those activities that are operating within the formally structured economy and are operating according to requirements of that sector. Although African countries have different requirements regarding this formalisation, these generally comprise those business activities which are registered as either sole proprietorships, partnerships, limited liability companies or cooperatives.

National Machineries for the Advancement of Women

These are generally defined as all those formal entities within the government, the civil service, or the ruling party, or, entities constituted as autonomous bodies, that have as their mandate the improvement of the involvement and/or status of women in national development.

2. THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FOOD PROCESSING SUBSECTOR

2.1 Participation Rates

Food processing is a traditional female activity and percentage estimates of women's role range from 90 percent to a 100 percent.¹ Because of this significant and traditional women's role, the food processing industry represents an easy sector for women to enter as entrepreneurs and employees, especially in the informal sector. For example 62 percent of business women in Malawi are involved in food processing and trade.² In the rest of the African continent, although empirical statistical evidence is not available, qualitative studies have highlighted women's dominant role in this sector. In Zimbabwe, food processing is one of the women-dominated sub-sectors.³ In Ghana, Sierra Leone and Tanzania, food and beverage processing is one of the areas where women outnumber men.⁴

Women's ease of entry into this sector is due to lower initial investment demands, less formal education and skill training requirements and greater congruence between these activities and women's traditional reproductive roles. Women's general lack of education, technical skills and experience also tend to reinforce their entry into this sector. The fact that women produce most of the raw material inputs domestically, thereby minimising foreign currency requirements is an additional factor that contributes to women's involvement in this sub-sector.

2.2 Entrepreneurship and Employment in Formal and Informal Sectors

Women's entrepreneurship activities in the food processing industry is in both the formal and informal sectors. These activities cover the areas of cereal processing (maize, rice, sorghum and millet) in East, West and Southern Africa and Sahel countries; cassava processing in West and Central Africa; oil extraction in Eastern and Southern Africa (from ground nuts, sunflower and soya beans) and West Africa (mostly from the palm oil tree and shea nuts); fish processing in West and East Africa, Mozambique and Malawi. Activities such as fruit and vegetable processing, catering and restaurants, beer brewing, wine manufacturing, meat and meat products processing, and, confectionaries are undertaken generally throughout the continent. These food processing areas also constitute modern branches of the food processing industry.

The Economic Commission for Africa's studies of women's entrepreneurship activities have revealed that women's formal sector activities are few and that they are mostly in women's traditional areas.⁵ These studies have also revealed that women's food processing activities dominate the small scale and informal sectors and are constrained by a lack of, or at least, limited access to credit, land, appropriate technology, business advisory and extension services, (e.g., business information covering marketing, credit, training opportunities). Due to these constraints, women's entrepreneurship activities in the formal sector are limited. Statistical information on women's formal versus informal sector food processing activities is not available.

Women's formal sector participation rates in food processing is limited, and they have generally been pushed into low income jobs in the unskilled and semi-skilled categories as casual and temporary workers. As skilled workers, women are mainly found in secretarial and administrative jobs such as clerks. Very few women occupy technical and management positions.⁶ For example in Ethiopia only 10 percent and 25 percent of the workforce in the food and beverage industries respectively, are women. In terms of decision-making positions (i.e., section head, including enterprise manager levels), women constitute only 5.4 percent and 10 percent in the food and beverage sectors respectively. An ECA study noted that women constituted 13.8 percent of the workforce in food processing industries in Zimbabwe in 1981 and observed that women's participation rates in Botswana, Lesotho and Tanzania were low even though statistical information pertaining to women's participation in food processing industries was not available.⁷ Generally gender-disaggregated data on women's formal sector employment in the food processing industry on the African Continent is very limited.

The informal sector, particularly in the urban areas is the biggest employment sector for women in Africa due to relatively few entry barriers. Although specific statistical information on women's employment in food processing is not available, it can safely be assumed that this sub-sector is one of the largest employers of women as women dominate both the informal sector and food processing activities. For example, various West African countries estimate that women constitute between 60-80 percent of the total informal sector labour force.⁸ In 1990, in Congo, Gambia and Zambia, the percentage of women's informal sector manufacturing activities (within which food processing activities dominate) to total employment was 68.4 percent, 71 percent, and 80.3 percent, respectively.⁹ In Tanzania, women constitute 53 percent of all informal sector workers while estimates of 55 percent and 75 percent have been given for Botswana and 64 percent for Zimbabwe.¹⁰ In Burkina Faso, where 75% of the economically active population is in the informal sector, 48% of the total are women.¹¹ In Gambia self employment in the informal sector accounted for 80 percent of all female total employment in 1987.¹²

2.3 Income Levels and Ownership Patterns

Women's food processing industries are an important source of income for large numbers of women many of whom have total family responsibility. The number of female headed households is on the increase, averaging 22 percent in Sub Sahara Africa and exceeding 33 percent in Kenya, Botswana and Lesotho.¹³

The levels of income from the food processing activities are however low due to factors such as simple, labour-intensive technologies, lack of capital, reliance on local markets, and combined home-based and household activities. Statistical evidence is however not available on the contribution of women's food processing industries to The Gross Domestic Product.¹⁴

Although women's informal sector activities play an important role in economic development, as already highlighted with respect to formal versus informal employment and entrepreneurship, they have largely remained invisible due to their location (mostly home based) and also partly due to the tendency of national statistics not to include women's informal sector activities in their national accounts.¹⁵

Ownership of food processing industries can be categorised as public and private with the exception of those countries that had nationalised their economies at independence. However the introduction of IMF, World Bank Economic Adjustment and Liberalisation Policies throughout most of Africa will mean more private sector participation.¹⁶

Women's ownership of formal sector food processing industries is limited due to either their lack of, or, limited access to credit, land etc. It has also been observed that although women may manage and run formal sector food processing industries the enterprises are commonly registered under their husband's name e.g., in Botswana, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Lesotho.¹⁷ In most parts of West and Central Africa, as gari and palm oil processing activities have become mechanised, the machines and enterprises are now principally owned by men who set rental rates for women due to the man's having access to resources such as credit. Similarly catering activities have also become male activities as women lack the necessary capital. This lack of access to productive resources has thus deprived women of the ownership rights.¹⁸

Women's ownership of food processing industries dominates the informal sector where the entry barriers are relatively low as already discussed.

3. FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR

Women's participation in the food processing sector as entrepreneurs and employees is affected by various socio-cultural, legal and educational factors. The intensity of these factors however vary depending on a country's socio-political and economic environment.

3.1 Socio-Cultural and Religious Factors

Socio-Cultural factors inclusive of societal norms, values and religious factors are one of the most pervasive gender-specific barriers to women's participation in the food processing industry both as entrepreneurs and employees.¹⁹

The social construction of gender relationships throughout Africa require that women occupy a subordinate position to their male counterparts. Socio-culturally, an African woman passes from the guardianship of her father to that of her husband. While being married, she is expected to be under the authority of and leadership of her husband who has the final authority in decision making. The socialisation process is also geared towards reinforcing and strengthening these social values and norms as Mpofu 1983 observed.²⁰

"Society at large recognises male dominance as given and the process of socialisation is so powerful as to make most women's horizons of knowledge too narrow to enable them to see beyond their male dictated inferiority."

Certain religious beliefs further reinforce this women's subordination. Women entrepreneurs thus operate within this social milieu and must seek their husband's permission in implementing major decisions such as starting a business venture, or seeking access to credit and other business services.²¹ This is a serious impediment to women's goal's for personal fulfilment and independent existence. In any case there is no guarantee that they will get the requisite permission and support from their husbands. Similarly most business financial institutions (banks) throughout the African Continent uphold these gender roles, attitudes and stereotypes and generally implicitly or explicitly insist on wives getting their husband's approval for any transactions with the bank. Thus even financial institutions reflect and perpetuate societal norms and values.

The gender based division of labour results in women primarily being looked upon as wives, mothers and home makers. They have to combine their various roles and meet their role expectations; consequently, this leaves women with very little time for meaningful business participation. Women produce about 80 percent of the food consumed in Africa and provide at least 60 percent of the agricultural labour.²² In addition to these productive labour activities, African women also perform the bulk of the reproductive labour activities (household chores).

Time is the scarcest resource for African women as they try to juggle multiple responsibilities. United Nations studies indicate that "African women are second only to those of Eastern Europe in the length of their working week if unpaid domestic labour is taken into account - over 65 hours a week. The gap with the average hours worked by African men is also one of the widest - some 12-13 hours a week".²³ This time dimension is a contributory factor to women's domination of home-cottage-based micro-to-small-scale food processing activities, as this allows them to undertake the reproductive labour roles.

As wives, mothers and home-makers, socio-cultural norms and values generally dictate that women stay at home. Business activities which necessitate women's frequent absence from home are generally viewed as unbecoming and can easily jeopardise their marital relationships.

Socio-cultural factors also negatively affect women's participation in paid employment. In some African countries, women are strictly limited to the confines of their homes and are largely still associated with their reproductive roles and responsibilities. Thus women's employment is generally considered secondary both to

men's employment and to their reproductive roles.²⁴ In terms of entrepreneurship development, this seclusion of women from social life has in general created women's unfamiliarity with public and commercial practices and has contributed to their lack of confidence.

Socio-cultural factors also negatively affect girls' and boys' educational patterns and choice of subjects at school: girls' choices of subjects, careers and vocational training subsequently influences and determines their promotion and occupational status in employment.

Demographic factors i.e marital and fertility patterns continue to influence women's participation in the food processing industry. Women's economic participation rates tend to be lower as most women tend to marry (as expected by culture) and to have children. Their participation rates are generally influenced by the number of children they have.²⁵ International Labour Organization projections based on past women's economic participation trends estimate that 28 percent of female population in Sub-Sahara Africa and 9 percent in Northern Africa can be expected to be economically active at the end of the 20th century. However, women's high fertility rates negatively affects their chances to complete primary, secondary and higher education as well as their vocational training and employment opportunities and status and this negatively affect their economic activity rates. Only three African countries, namely Mauritius, Zimbabwe and Botswana have achieved a sizable decline in fertility rates while similar progress for the rest of the continent is not expected until the end of the century.²⁶

3.2 Legal Factors

During and after the United Nations Decade for women, much progress has been achieved in removing the legal barriers that negatively affected women's participation in the food processing industry in particular and industrial development in general. Much progress has been made regarding the promotion of equality of men and women in constitutional and labour issues as well as in family relations issues. However, the implementation and application of such laws lag behind due to de-facto discrimination emanating from the socio-cultural factors as discussed above.

Legal barriers with respect to women's access to essential resources such as land and other forms of movable and immovable property, finance etc., remain as some of the barriers affecting women's participation in the food processing sector as entrepreneurs. Inheritance and marriage laws in some countries present yet other sets of constraints hindering African Women's access to the fruits of their labour.²⁷ In patrilineal societies, ownership of land and other forms of movable and immovable properties is through the head of the household, who is presumed to be male, thus negating women's control to these assets which are deemed very essential for purposes of banks' collateral requirements.²⁸

Legal factors continue to influence women's access to financial resources as women in some countries are by law (as opposed to socio-cultural requirements) still required to get husband's approval in order to enter into any contract with any bank. In countries where this legal provision does not apply e.g., in Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal, there is still some reluctance on the part of most banks to enter into legal contracts with women, partly due to socio-cultural factors and other considerations.²⁹ In terms of women's employment, legal barriers still influence women's conditions of service such as their access to equal employment opportunities, equal salaries for equal jobs, taxation, maternity and breast feeding opportunities

In summary it can be said that legal reforms have often not ensured women's rights, even in countries where women dominate the food processing sector both as employees and entrepreneurs. Even in those countries where legal barriers have been removed, women still suffer constitutional and de-facto discrimination. Legal reforms should guarantee women's constitutional and legal rights in terms of access to employment, land and other means of production and should ensure that women will benefit from research, training and credit.³⁰

3.3 Educational Factors

Opportunities for integration and advancement into the labour market are dependent on education and training factors. The education gap between men and women therefore results in lower women's participation rates in food processing industries either as entrepreneurs or employees. United Nations Statistical analysts indicate that

women's literacy rates remain much higher than men's on the African continent except in Botswana and Seychelles.³¹ For example, during the 1980-1984 period, women's illiteracy rates for the 15 years and above age-group in seven countries namely Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Niger, Somalia and Togo were 90 percent and above. The illiteracy rates for the rest of the countries ranged between 28 percent and 90 percent.³² High illiteracy rates inhibit women's entry into industrial jobs requiring formal education and training and also limit their options for engaging in profitable and sizeable food processing industries.

Many African countries have and continue to implement initiatives for the eradication of illiteracy through universal primary school education and many countries have attained or nearly attained universal primary education for their nationals. (see appendix 3, table 1). However, due to socio-cultural factors, marital status and high fertility rates, several African countries are still far from this. Female enrolment remains significantly lower than that of males across the board. In 1983, girls in Sub-Sahara Africa accounted for only 44 percent of all students in primary school, 34 percent of enrolment in secondary schools and 21 percent in higher education. There have also been dramatic drops in primary school enrolment in most countries that are implementing Economic Reform Programmes, for it is a well-documented fact that households faced with economic hardships often withdraw daughters from school and would rather invest their limited resources in the education of sons.

Girls' secondary school enrolment is also lower than boys'. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization, quoting the World Bank, has indicated that in 1983 for example, girls constituted 34 percent of secondary school enrolment and 21 percent of higher education enrolment in Africa. In Technical and Vocational schools, female enrolment is between 20 and 60 percent of total enrolment. In terms of fields of study, the majority of the female students are concentrated in traditionally female programmes such as business studies and teacher training. There are only a few girls who enter into the scientific and technical areas as compared to boys; this trend is carried over from secondary high school up to University and Technical and Vocational-Technical Colleges. For example, in education by correspondence, women constituted 13 percent and 9 percent of the total enrolment in Tanzania and Zambia respectively, and their fields of study were mainly teacher's training.³³ The same trend can be observed from the University of Zimbabwe enrolment rates in 1990 within which women constituted only 24 percent of the student's enrolment. They had better participation rates in arts (38.2 percent), law (33.3 percent), Medicine (30.2 percent), and social studies (28.7 percent). Their enrolment rates were lowest in Engineering (2.7 percent), Veterinary Science (10.4 percent), Agriculture (15.9 percent) and Science (19.4 percent). In terms of vocational and technical colleges, women's enrolment numbers were lower than men's (34 percent) and there were very few women enrolling in the traditional male dominated fields such as Automotive Engineering (less than 3 percent), Computer Science (35 percent), Construction/Civil Engineering (6 percent), Electrical Engineering (less than 5 percent), Mechanical Engineering (9 percent) Mining, and Engineering (none) and Science and Technology (less than 2 percent). Women dominated-fields such as secretarial studies (67 percent), Textile Technology (53 percent), and General Development short courses (63 percent).³⁴

Given the scenario highlighted above, it is clear that girls' economic participation rates will continue to be lower than boys given the considerable educational gaps between men and women. They will also generally receive lower salaries given the fact that jobs in scientific and technical fields are higher paying than those in social sciences. One's education and training determines one's absorption, promotion and advancement opportunities in the labour market. In terms of entrepreneurship development, girls' choice of fields of studies limits their entrepreneurial activities resulting in their entry into already overcrowded sectors.

4. OBSTACLES AFFECTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR AS ENTREPRENEURS AND EMPLOYEES

4.1 OBSTACLES FACED BY WOMEN IN FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR AS ENTREPRENEURS

In spite of the important role that African women are playing in the food processing industry as discussed under 1, African women face numerous constraints in their entrepreneurship activities. In addition to facing the common problems that entrepreneurs in general face, they in addition are incapacitated by gender-specific constraints in the areas of credit/finance, training, technology, institutional support services etc.

4.1.1 Lack of/Limited Access to Credit

Lack of access to credit is one to the obstacles to women's participation in the food processing sector as entrepreneurs. A recently held workshop on "women's access to financial services in Africa" which reviewed case studies from Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Ethiopia, observed that current policies and procedures of the financial institutions do not facilitate women's access to financial services.³⁵ The ADB, UNIDO and ECA have also raised similar concerns.³⁶

From this documentation, women's lack of, or, limited access to finance from formal sources of credit i.e the commercial banks is due:

- to their lack of collateral and other forms of securities required by commercial banks. As already mentioned in 2, this is caused by patriarchal socio-cultural factors and legal factors which confer property ownership rights and other productive resources which can be used as collateral on men.
- to the generally small amounts requested in their loan applications which most commercial banks are not willing to consider due to the high administrative costs of small loans. Women entrepreneurs tend to apply for small loans to finance their small scale activities. World Bank studies have shown that the administrative costs for handling larger loans were in the order of 0.3 to 0.5 percent of loan costs whereas small scale loans ranged between 2.6 to 2.7 percent.³⁷ These high administrative costs may affect not only the viability of an enterprise but the entire profitability of the bank.
- to the cumbersome application procedures particularly with respect to paper work and time. Given their multiple roles women generally do not have the time to follow-up the necessary application procedures. The women's limited educational attainment levels also act as an impediment in as far as completion of application forms are concerned.
- to the fact that women have limited experience in dealing with the commercial environment given their general seclusion from society due to socio-cultural factors, low education levels etc. This unfamiliarity instills fear and lack of confidence when dealing with the banks. This fear is compounded by the general male environment in commercial bank's decision-making positions.
- to the fact that commercial banks generally deem women's enterprises as high risks due to the fact that most of the women have no track record due to the small-scale and informal sector location of their enterprises. This problem is further aggravated by the fact that most women do not employ proper accounting procedures and are thus not able to produce records required by the commercial banks. Furthermore, women's general inability to prepare bankable business plans is yet another constraint which results in their lack of access to credit.
- to the fact that some formal banking procedures and regulations require married women to get written approval from husbands to enter into contract with banks. Some banks even demand that husbands sign or co-sign the application forms while men on the other hand are not subjected to such measures.
- to the generally negative attitudes regarding women's competence by financial institutions. Many women's projects may be turned down simply because most banks will prefer to deal with men.
- to lack of information about sources of credit.

Women's no-accessibility to foreign currency is interlinked with, and compounds, the seriousness of their problems with credit, partly due to the fact that women's food processing activities are found predominately in the small scale and informal sectors, for which there are generally no currency allocations.

4.1.2 Lack of Management and Technical Skills

The Economic Commission for Africa and various UNIDO country studies have identified that lack of management and technical skills is one of the major constraints of women entrepreneurs in the food processing sector.³⁸ Due to the fact that most women's enterprises are home-based and thus largely, "invisible", training institutions generally have problems in locating and targeting them. Women's illiteracy and their low levels of education generally, also account for their lack of training opportunities as most training programmes are designed for literate individuals and/or entrepreneurs. The commonly expressed management skills required for successful entrepreneurship are budgeting, price calculations, marketing and record keeping.³⁹ Due to the fact that most women entrepreneurs in the food processing sector lack these management skills, their small scale enterprises are often characterised by low profits, and minimal opportunities for expansion and growth.⁴⁰

Training in technical and management skills for women will thus not only improve product quality and marketing opportunities but will also ensure that machines function efficiently and are properly maintained and that women's employment options are broadened.

Women's marketing constraints largely emanate from the fact that most women's food processing enterprises are instituted without proper market demand research, especially in relation to locations and product options and they all mostly congregate their products in the same market area, which results in overcrowding, thereby creating stiff competition among themselves; the result is profit loss and bankruptcy.⁴¹ The problem is also compounded by women's general lack of transport for easy transportation of products partly due to their lack of access to credit for the purchase of motor vehicles. Most women entrepreneurs also do not advertise their products and customers have to find out about the existence of their products on their own. Packaging is yet one more marketing-related constraint which women entrepreneurs face. Packaging is not only important for marketing but is also essential to maintain quality of products. Due to these mentioned marketing problems, women entrepreneurs face very stiff competition from large scale commercial producers with well developed marketing strategies and efficient vehicles for transportation.

Sub-contracting arrangements between large and small scale women's food processing industries are still not well developed partly due to women's small scale enterprises, lack of resources and capacity to undertake it. Large-scale food processing industries, on the other hand, do not have sufficient confidence to sub-contract to women's entrepreneurs due to their typically small scale of operation, poor organisational and production structures and inferior, unreliable technologies.

4.1.3 Lack of Training and Extension Services

Training in management and technical skills is very essential if women are to overcome their skills deficit as mentioned above. Women have tended not to benefit much from formal business training offered due to the fact that most training has tended to be long-term and residential and at locations far away from their homes. This arrangement is not the best for women given their multiple roles. Furthermore, such training facilities usually do not have facilities for nursing mothers. Women entrepreneurs have also tended to be by-passed by business training and extensive services due to the fact that most of them operate home-based enterprises and hence are largely invisible to most business support institutions.

4.1.4 Lack of Business Information

Accessibility to business information is a prerequisite for any business person to survive in the highly competitive business environment. Women entrepreneurs because of their small scale and informal nature of their operations generally do not benefit from business information services available through private sector business organisations whose membership is comprised mostly by medium-to-large-scale entrepreneurs. Women entrepreneurs are not members of these organisations partly because they cannot afford the exorbitant membership costs coupled with the fact that they are generally neither aware of the existence of such organisations nor of how to utilise their information.⁴² A PTA country programming mission on Women-in-Industry to selected PTA member states revealed that one of the main problems women face in business is lack of access to business or technical information, and that where information was available, there were problems

with its dissemination.⁴³ Women need information on markets, products, technical details, e.g., import regulations, methods of payment, sources of equipment, pricing, freight charges, competitors, packaging etc.⁴⁴

4.1.5 Lack of Access to *Appropriate Technologies

Women's food processing activities are characterised by traditional, simple technologies which are often small scale, labour intensive, and frequently time-consuming. These low technologies reduce the women's production levels and their competitiveness. For example appropriate technologies have yet to be introduced for grinding mills, oil presses, fish smokers/dryers, fruit juice pressers, solar dryers for vegetables and fruit.⁴⁵

In cases where technologies have been upgraded, men often replace women.⁴⁶ This has happened with the grinding mill programme in most of East, West and Southern Africa where men have ended up being employed as millers. In most of West and Central Africa, gari and oil processing have now become a male dominated activity since the introduction of semi-mechanised machines which are principally owned by males who now set rental rates for women producers. Similarly catering and restaurant activities have now become predominantly male activities.⁴⁷ This displacement of women is due to a variety of factors such as material gains, or technology inappropriateness to women's needs and traditional working habits, lack of/limited access to credit for the acquisition of technologies and lack of, or limited, training for women in machine operation, maintenance and repair. It has also been observed that where technologies are available, most women processors still continue to use traditional methods due to inability to obtain finance/credit as discussed above. Rapid assimilation of food technologies has occurred when women's means to acquire the technologies has been facilitated e.g., commills in Cameroon, fish smoking ovens in Ghana.⁴⁸ If women do not have access to credit, extension service training etc, then it is likely that males will own the machines due their access to these and other important business and production resources.

Most technologies that have been developed have often not been oriented towards women's food processing activities and women are often not consulted during the design stage; the result is a mismatch between the equipment and local women's priorities, customs and environment.⁴⁹ A Ministers' Conference on Women and Food Technologies also made this observation and commented;

"Women often are not consulted by engineers about the design or location of a new technology. As a result, many technologies have proved to be unacceptable or have failed to show an improvement time - or energy-wise over existing traditional technologies."⁵⁰

Lack of information about the existing technologies is yet another barrier for women coupled with the fact that the disseminators of technology, who are mostly male extension workers often find it easier not to work with women.⁵¹ Women are also not trained in the technical skills necessary for them to operate and maintain technologies.

When technology is developed and disseminated, considerations should thus be placed on economic factors such as the cost of the new equipment, the cost of introducing the improved technology, the land tenure system, training and extension service and legal reforms.

4.1.6 Lack of Strong Women's Business Associations

Until recently, most African countries with the exception of West African States did not have women's business associations to act as pressure or lobbying groups as well as to provide linkages for women entrepreneurs with already existing business support services. Through ECA/ATRCW and PTA initiatives, such associations have recently been formed in 25 African Countries and a Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs in Africa (FAWE) and a Federation for Associations of Women in Business in East and Southern Africa have been initiated.⁵² Support through capacity-building initiatives is however necessary in order to strengthen the ability of these associations to effectively fulfil their roles.

4.1.7 Restrictive Legal and Regulatory Environment

In many African countries, women, particularly those in the informal sector, face gender-specific constraints emanating from the restrictive legal and regulatory procedures concerning enterprise formation and registration, social legislation concerning health and hygienic standards as well as building standards. Many women entrepreneurs find themselves not meeting the established requirements due to their lack of access to resources such as finance, land etc.; this results in their constant harassment by police.

4.2 CONSTRAINTS FACED BY WOMEN IN THE FOOD PROCESSING SECTOR AS EMPLOYEES/WORKERS

Due to low educational levels, women's employment in the formal sector of food processing industries is confined to low-paying positions mainly, in the unskilled and semi-skilled categories, where working conditions are poor.⁵³ Decision-making and top management positions are male preserves. Most of the tasks that are performed by women are mainly the first ones to be eliminated by the introduction of semi-or-fully-automated production systems.⁵⁴

In most African countries, there are legal provisions regarding equality of opportunity for women in employment. There also exist regulations relating to equal pay for equal work, maternity leave benefits, taxation of women as individuals rather than as appendages to their husbands e.g., in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Senegal, Sierra Leone. Although employers accept the legal provisions of such legislation, they always find ways of circumventing them through measures such as reclassification of jobs and not hiring women in order to be unaffected by maternity leave regulations. Employers do this by instituting systematic and subtle discriminatory measures for a particular job/occupational category, e.g., health and weight requirements. In countries that prohibit women's night employment, this measure has prevented women from being employed.

Lack of child care facilities at the workplace is one of the most essential work-related facilities and yet this service is not common. This service is essential so as to enable women to concentrate on their work, because they know that the child is exposed to a safe and stimulating environment and to provide a place for women to breast feed younger children/infants.

Many employers (and society-at-large), continue to uphold traditional values and attitudes about what constitutes men's and women's work and this influences their hiring practices. Similarly women's self imposed discriminatory behaviour/attitudes in terms of the fields of studies and vocational training (mostly social science and arts subjects and very few in the natural sciences), results in very few women in scientific and technical areas.

Closely linked with this problem is the fact that many employers will not hire women employees; they use questionable excuses such as unavailability of toilets and showers for women, even though such facilities could easily be constructed.

Sexual harassment at the workplace continues to torment many women workers even though the problem largely remains a hidden one. Victims often do not report it for fear of reprisals which could take the form of denied promotions, and training opportunities, allocation of unsavoury job assignments and even involuntary termination.

Women in food processing industries, especially fish, meat, frozen food and dairy products, experience health and safety problems as a result of the usually cold, wet, and damp environment. This may result in problems of physical coordination and reduced movement which can result in reduced speed, poor work quality, and eventual termination.

Postural problems may also develop as a result of long hours of standing which can lead to increased varicose veins. Furthermore, a recent survey of work during pregnancy has demonstrated that the risk of pre-term or

low birth weight infants co-related significantly with the degree of standing, heavy lifting and extremes of temperature and humidity.⁵⁵

Generally women are not active in trade unions due to various factors such as unsuitability of meeting times i.e mostly weekends and evenings. Consequently, matters pertaining to the improvements of their working conditions are largely not considered a priority.

Women working in the informal sector are often not protected by labour legislation and they generally face much worse working conditions, as provisions such as maternity leave, equal pay for equal work, working hours, do not apply.⁵⁶

5. APPRAISAL OF WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT POLICIES, ITS FOCUS, SECTORAL PRIORITIES AND ITS LINKAGE WITH INDUSTRIAL AND OVERALL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

The Arusha and Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies for the advancement of women contain the main focus and sectoral priorities for women's advancement policies. The sectoral priorities that will be appraised cover the areas of education, employment, industry and trade, agriculture, law and health.

5.1 Women in Education

The main focus and sectoral priorities for women's advancement policy include;

- to reduce women's high illiteracy rates
- to increase women's enrolment rates to levels equal to that of men
- to reduce the girls' drop-out rates in primary and secondary school
- to encourage girls' enrolment in science and technical subjects
- to provide career guidance to girls at an early age so as to enable them to choose their courses wisely
- to have secondary school curricula that offer many options for girls as well as to have school text books and teaching materials that do not reinforce gender-bias.

Education is one of the most important pre-requisites for women to meaningfully participate in industrial as well as in overall development. As already discussed above, African governments in varying degrees have taken some measures to increase women's access to education and training. Some of these measures include the introduction of universal primary school education, increasing the number of primary schools and places to cater for females and other disadvantaged groups, location of schools as near to the people as possible, and education programmes to encourage parents to send girls to school and keep them enrolled.

However, as already discussed in 2, women's illiteracy rates remain considerably high compared to that of men, and their enrolment rates in primary, secondary and tertiary levels remain low. The drop-out rates in primary and secondary school still remain high. Women's enrolment in science and technical subjects in secondary school and in technical and vocational training institutions remains very low. Curriculum and career guidance for girls still lags behind and girls continue to make subject choices that lead them to traditional female fields.

The above mentioned constraints have the effect of reducing women's industrial employment opportunities as well as their participation in overall development. Consequently, women's industrial labour force participation rates, are low and they occupy poorly paid positions in the unskilled and semi-skilled occupations categories. Women's participation in decision making positions remains minimal.

Women's access to on the job training is limited by their occupational levels which require little technical experience; this trend is compounded by cultural and educational practices and generally by women's minimal experience in formal sector employment.

Thus, although efforts have been made to implement priorities for women's advancement in education, only limited achievements have been made. There is a need to increase women's access to education, particularly

at secondary and tertiary levels where women's enrolment rates still remain very low and subject choices require realignment. Increasing access at these levels appears to be the single most essential pre-condition for women's integration into the modern sector labour force and overall development. The link between advancement policies for women's education and industrial and overall development remains weak and should be strengthened.

5.2 Women and Employment

Women's advancement sectoral priorities in employment aim to:

- increase women's employment opportunities in industry.
- to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women e.g.. in the areas of hiring, salary and wage determination, promotion and advancement.
- to provide child care facilities at the workplace.
- to provide maternity protection schemes as laid down in the ILO Maternity Protection Convention.
- to protect women against sexual harassment.

In terms of sectoral distribution, women are concentrated in agriculture and in the informal sector. The fact that 80 percent of the food production sector are women serves as good documentation.⁵⁷

Their formal sector participation patterns show that very few women are employed in the formal sector and that they are concentrated in low skilled, low wage job categories, which carry few opportunities for advancement and are found mainly in the traditional sectors of textiles, garment, food and beverages and most service sectors such as teaching, and health.⁵⁸ For example, women's service sector participation rates are expected to increase from 3 to 8.3 percent in Senegal, 7 to 13.6 percent in Cote d'Ivoire, 19.8 percent to 30.5 percent in Nigeria and 31.6 percent to 51 percent in Mauritius.⁵⁹ Furthermore, evidence from ILO's country studies on women's employment, discrimination and promotion of equality in Africa suggests that women have to have a better education to be considered for a job and that often job requirements are exaggerated in order to discriminate against women. The United Nations has also noted that employers generally still prefer men to women.⁶⁰ A study in Zambia showed that in formal employment 58 percent of the men had only primary education compared to 27.9 percent for the women. Women thus ran a greater risk of being unemployed than men and an increasing number of women are turning to self employment or are becoming unpaid family workers, e.g., 33 percent in Kenya in 1982, 80 percent in urban areas of Tanzania, and three-quarters of all female workers in Ghana.⁶¹

Overall, women's employment opportunities have diminished more than men's. The United Nations for example, noted that women's economic activity rates dramatically dropped between 1970-1990 for all countries of East and Southern Africa except in Mauritius and Zambia.⁶² In North Africa, although women's participation has been increasing from 12 percent in 1975 to 14 percent in 1985, women's economic activity rates still remain low.⁶³

In the 1980s, modern sector employment has significantly declined as a result of tight fiscal policies which have necessitated retrenchment. Although statistical evidence is not available, already adjustment programmes in East and Southern Africa in the 1980s are reported to have had a negative impact on women, further widening existing gender disparities.⁶⁴ In deciding whom to retrench, it is likely that traditional perceptions that only men are heads of households is likely to result in more female layoffs, although evidence shows that the phenomenon of female heads of households is increasing as already discussed.

In terms of formal sector participation rates, women for example account for 19.9 percent of salaried employees in Angola, 30.7 percent in Botswana, 21.3 percent in Kenya, 14.6 percent in Malawi, 28.8 percent in Swaziland and 16.5 percent in Zimbabwe.⁶⁵ In Ghana women constitute less than 15 percent of formal sector employees and 5 percent and 6 percent respectively in Togo and Benin, 10 percent and 12 percent respectively in Madagascar and Senegal.⁶⁶

Women are conspicuous by their absence in decision making and management positions. For example they constitute only 4.9 percent and 6.7 percent respectively of managers and high administrative personnel in Ghana

and Kenya respectively.⁶⁷ They also constitute 3 percent of Ministerial positions, 30 percent in Parliament, and 25 percent of all senior Government positions of East and Southern African Countries.⁶⁸

As already discussed in section 2, protective legislation regarding night employment, equal pay and equal work, maternity leave, breast feeding and child care has largely resulted in women's high unemployment levels. Many employers would rather not employ women if their employment results in increased expenditure. Thus, legislation protecting women can have an adverse effect on their employment opportunities if not balanced by incentives for employers. The encouragement to have child care facilities at work has largely not been implemented. Meanwhile women continue to experience sexual harassment at the workplace and many of them do not report it due to the possible consequences already discussed.

From the above analysis, it is evident that a gap still exists between women's policies for women's employment and industrial and general development policies. The challenge for the future lies in preparing women for the requirements of participation in the modern sector of the economy. Improvements are required in the socio-economic and educational sectors where women continue to suffer major disadvantages in relation to men. The linkage between sectoral policies for women's advancement and those for industrial and economic development is weak and needs to be strengthened.

5.3 Women In Agriculture

Women produce 80 percent of the food consumed in Africa and thus play a big role in the production cycle.

The priorities for women's advancement in this sector focus on increased:

- women's access to production resources such as land, credit and technology
- marketing assistance in the form of access to transport.
- women's access to extension and training.
- women's access to appropriate food processing technologies that are time-and-labour saving and yet do not displace women from their livelihood. Women should be involved in the design, testing and dissemination of the technologies.
- women's agricultural activities should be closely linked to food processing activities, access to land, credit, extension and training and appropriate technology, and women should to be involved in the design and testing of agricultural-related technological improvements or innovations

A strong linkage still has to be established between women's activities in food production and food processing. In many countries, women still have no access to, or, control of land, as the land tenure allocation systems are determined on the basis of a patriarchal system and thus centre ownership upon men. Women's access to extension and training is still very limited due to socio-cultural constraints. Technological developments have largely been inappropriate or have been targeted at male activities e.g., land preparation and ploughing which have consequently resulted in increased acreage under cultivation. This has increased women's workload as planting, weeding, and harvesting are women's activities.

Many agricultural products that women produce continue to be processed in urban areas and subsequently are transported back to them in rural areas as expensive, finished products which most of them cannot even afford. The food processing industries have also created limited employment opportunities for women since most employers generally still prefer male workers. Women are thus displaced from food processing activities which traditionally is a female activity.

Women are the farmers in Africa and all necessary measures should be taken to enhance their productivity, as well as to foster a strong linkage with agro-industries in order to add value to their products. Other necessary measures include women's increased access to credit, land, extension and training and technology.

5.4 Women and the Law

The identification and elimination of every law that hinders women from participating in all aspects of industrial, and socio-economic development and educating society about these laws are the main aims of the sectoral

priorities for women's advancement regarding the legal system. To this effect, many African Governments have signed International Conventions and have also enacted activity focused upon national legislative measures e.g., on family law, and employment. However, UNIDO country information notes and UNIDO mission reports already cited, continuously indicate that implementation of these legislative measures is often delayed at least partly due to socio-cultural constraints. The United Nations has noted that even in those countries where legal barriers have been removed, women still suffer constitutional and de-facto discrimination as already discussed.

In many countries, discrimination on the basis of sex is still not illegal. Legal barriers with respect to women's access to land and property ownership also generally prevail. Similar constraints also prevail with respect to inheritance and divorce, laws. Laws pertaining to domestic violence against women are generally non-existent, or were they do, they are not reinforced due to the excuse that this is a "domestic matter". Furthermore in countries where these legislative measures exist, women and society at large are generally not conversant about the laws' content or provisions, thereby calling for intensive and mass education campaigns. Governments and NGOs should compliment each other in ensuring that women are accorded the necessary legal protection from and education about these laws.

Thus linkage weaknesses also exist between women's legal advancement concerns and industrial and overall development policies.

5.5 Women and Health

The women's priorities for this sectoral area include:

- the promotion of primary health care including improved nutrition and mother and child care
- to locate and make available health delivery systems within reach of all women
- to promote family-planning education for both men and women and promote women's ability to control their own fertility
- to promote preventive health care measures including vaccinations of children and pregnant women against epidemic diseases. This also includes creating awareness about diseases such as AIDS.
- provision of adequate water and sanitation

Most African countries are trying to address the above-mentioned priorities through the introduction of health programs for all by the year 2000. In the meantime, maternal and child mortality rates remain high and health delivery systems are usually not within women's easy reach, especially in the rural areas; thus these areas require special and immediate attention. Primary health care education has not adequately reached most women and there are inadequate water and sanitation facilities. Due to socio-cultural factors, decisions regarding the size of the family still remain the domain of men. Women continue to be overworked because of their multiple roles consequently resulting in their with the consequent result of poor health for themselves and low rates of child survival. Drops in women's life expectancies have been reported e.g., 5.1 percent and 4.1 percent in Kenya and Ethiopia respectively.⁶⁶

The AIDS epidemic is likely to have a stronger impact on women than men due to socio-cultural factors. For example in Blantyre, 22 percent of all pregnant women are infected with AIDS, 22 percent of pregnant women in Lusaka, and 24 percent in Kampala (1989). In Ghana one in four urban female prostitutes carries the AIDS virus and 13 percent of the female prostitutes in Dakar.⁷⁰

Women are the carriers of human life and are largely responsible for its maintenance and development and are thus critical players in the development of human resources in any country. Their personal survival is central to the survival of their children. Women's health thus needs to be nurtured in order to achieve economic development which comes through the strengthening of a country's human resource base through, among other measures, preventive health care and, maintenance programs. Industrial development policies should thus take this into consideration and provide the necessary support in terms of maternity benefits and child care facilities, allow women breast feeding times etc.. In such ways, women's health advancement policies will be closely linked to those for industrial and general development.

5.6 Women and Technology

Women's advancement priorities in the technology area include: the facilitation of women's access to technology through credit; the development of technologies that are within the financial reach of women; training of women in the operation, maintenance and repair of equipment; involvement of women in technology design and testing; and ensuring that mechanisation of technology does not lead to women's displacement. As already discussed in 2.1, women and technology concerns have not been adequately addressed and a wide gap still exists between policies for women's advancement and industrialisation and overall socio-economic development.

5.7 Women and Industry and Commerce

Women's advancement priorities in industry and commerce include: facilitation of women's participation in business including in the informal sector; the facilitation and increase of women's access to productive resources such as land and credit; facilitating women's access to business advisory and extension services; training, marketing, information etc. Section 3 has discussed these sectoral priorities in detail and an analysis of the factors that influence women's access to these resources/services was provided in Section 2. From the analysis in these sections, it is clear that industrial and overall development policies have not significantly addressed priorities for women's advancement in business. A more effective linkage should therefore be created between these priorities for women's advancement and industrial/economic and social development.

6. THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Institutional support services for industrial food processing activities are provided through:

- Government Institutions, Ministries of Industry/Commerce and Trade, Small Scale Enterprise Development Corporations, National Machineries for the Advancement of Women and Regional Economic groupings.
- Private Sector Industry/Commerce Related Business Institutions/Associations (Chambers of Commerce and Industries) and Commercial Banks
- Traditional Financing Systems
- Non Governmental Organisations
- Inter-Governmental Organisations, Bilateral and Multi-Lateral Agencies

6.1 GOVERNMENT SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS

6.1.1 Ministries of Industry/Commerce and Trade

In most African countries, Ministries of Industry and Trade are responsible for the formulation of industrial policy as well as monitoring and coordinating its implementation. The ministries usually have "desks" to coordinate specific industrial activities including a desk for the coordinating of the food processing industries. Although there are variations regarding the other responsibilities of these institutions, these ministries are also commonly associated with the allocation of foreign currency for commercial businesses, export promotion, providing licences etc.

These Ministries' policies usually include special policy directions with respect to small scale enterprises but do not include the informal sector where women dominate. The activities of these ministries also usually do not have a special focus on women.

There are also export boards/councils in most African Countries and their role is to identify export markets for local exporters, undertake research, collect and disseminate trade information etc. These boards are either government-managed or are entirely private sector initiatives.

6.1.2 Regional Level Economic Groupings

Regional level economic groupings such as the Southern African Development Community, (SADC), the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) implement industrial level projects in all sub-sectors including food processing.

In the past, these organisations, for example, SADC and PTA have tended not to have a special focus on women although they both are now specifically targeting women. The SADC for instance is doing this through financial sponsorship from CIDA and executed through UNIFEM; the group is implementing gender-sensitisation training programmes for all sectors which SADC serves.

The PTA organised its first round table conference for women in business in Eastern and Southern Africa in July 1992; a second round table conference was held in Harare in July 1993, which culminated in the formation of a Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa. This round table conference recommended the strengthening of women in business in PTA countries as well as setting up a US\$360 million revolving loan fund to be managed by the PTA Trade and Development Bank.⁷¹ The PTA also has established a Women In Business unit (WIB) whose objectives include the integration of women into PTA activities and awareness of WID issues at the Policy level.⁷²

The PTA also provides services of the Trade Information Network (TINET) to PTA member countries. Data are available on import and export statistics, profiles of importers and exporters and trade control measures. Women entrepreneurs in the food processing industry could also benefit from this information if these services were made known to them. Investment promotion centres have also been established in most countries for purposes of providing information and support services to investors on such topics as countries' investment climate, regulation and procedures, major investment opportunities, information, and financing possibilities

6.1.3 National Machineries for the Advancement of Women

The United Nations World Conferences for the advancement of women held at Mexico (1975), Copenhagen (1980) and Nairobi (1985) all stress the importance of national machineries in improving the status of women.⁷³ During the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985), many national machineries were established in many countries.⁷⁴

These national machineries are based on and developed within the context of each country's particular political, social and economic environment. National machineries have the major responsibility for advocating gender/stimulating the development of policies and programmes for gender equality and to monitor their implementation across all sectors.⁷⁵

As of 1987 women's machineries took the following forms:

- full-fledged ministries in Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, Togo, Zaire and Zimbabwe
- Machineries located in, or affiliated with, Ministries of Labour and Social services and Ministries of Agriculture and Youth, Culture and Sports eg Egypt, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritania, Morocco, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Niger, Nigeria
- Advisory consultative bodies such as Women's Bureaux, National Councils, or National Commissions in Gambia, Ghana, Malawi and Uganda.
- Women's wings or units affiliated to the national ruling parties in Algeria, Angola, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Zambia.⁷⁶

The effectiveness of national machineries has, however, been limited partly due to financial and human resource constraints as well as lack of ineffective linkages with other ministries and governing bodies.⁷⁷ Structural issues relating to the location and status of women's machineries have also been raised as these were factors that determine its linkages and access to decision making and planning processes.

6.1.4 Institutions for the Development of Small Scale Enterprises

Food processing activities are also supported by institutions for the promotion and development of small scale enterprises and these institutions are found in most countries. The business support services provided by these institutions is usually in the form of entrepreneurship development, training, and credit. However there are no readily available statistics to show the extent to which women involved in food processing industries have benefited from this support. Examples of these institutions are for example Small Development Corporations - SIDO (Tanzania), Small Enterprise Development Corporation - SEDCO (Zimbabwe and Uganda), National Board of Small Scale Industries - (NBSSI) in Ghana, and Small Scale Development Organisation of Malawi - SEDOM. These institutions largely have no gender bias. They however generally accept implementation of women-focused projects under special funding, usually by donor agencies. For example SIDO is currently implementing a women's project on food processing and is supported by UNIDO.

6.2 PRIVATE SECTOR INSTITUTIONS

6.2.1 Chambers of Commerce and Industry

Most of the African countries have Chambers of Commerce which provide entrepreneurs in the food processing industry and other sub-sectors periodically with new business information and organise entrepreneurship development seminars on identified areas of need. The Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry for instance sponsored a seminar during the launching of the National Association of Kenyan women in business.⁷³

These institutions usually serve the interest of large scale entrepreneurs and not of those in the small scale and informal sectors where women predominate. Some of the institutions, have, however set up small industries development units but they generally have no special focus on women entrepreneurs.

Most women entrepreneurs also do not belong to these institutions partly because they cannot afford the high membership fees. Women can however, benefit, from the business support services they provide if strong linkages are developed between them and associations for women entrepreneurs.

6.2.2 Commercial Banks - Formal Sources of Credit

Commercial banks are the main sources of formal credit. Some of them have opened small business development units for the provision of short-to-medium term capital. Banks generally compliment their financial lending operations with advisory services and training. Accessibility to their funds is based on collateral and other available securities, thus, disqualifying women, the majority of whom can not meet these requirements due to socio-cultural and legal constraints. As discussed earlier, the banking community is generally very conservative and largely reflects society's socio-cultural values and norms governing men's and women's position in society.

Most commercial banks could,an through their small business services divisions administer special women's funds financed by the donor community and they could also administer credit guarantee schemes as profitable ventures.

6.3 TRADITIONAL FORMS OF CREDIT

Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs), are the informal traditional institutions of saving and credit in Africa. They are known by different names in different countries e.g Chilemba in Uganda, Isusu in Nigeria, Susu in Ghana, Equib in Ethiopia, Gamaiyah in Egypt, Chiperegani or Chilimba in Malawi, Tontines/Nyangis in Niger, Cameroon and Senegal (or Natt) and Hagbad in Somalia.⁷⁴ ROSCAs are characterised by high interest rates, short credit cycles and the group's dimensions limit the amount of credit available. The lack of official status of the ROSCAs also makes members vulnerable in case of default by any of its members.

Pawn brokers are also an informal source of credit for many women. Their major problem with this credit source is extremely high interest rates.

6.4 WOMEN'S FINANCING INTERMEDIATORIES

6.4.1 Women's World Banking (WWB)

Women's World Banking is an independent financial institution registered in the Netherlands in 1979 and has its headquarters in New York. It provides loan guarantee mechanisms to support financing of women's business activities. WWB has affiliates in Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, the Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

WWB has experience in building organisations for easing women's access to credit and other business support services, and providing training and technical services to women.

6.4.2 The Self Employed Women's Association - Cooperative Bank (SEWA)

This bank started as a cooperative focusing on assisting its members to participate in formal banking systems. It became a formal bank in 1974 and its 4,000 members contributed small amounts of capital for setting up the bank.

6.5 THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

The African Development Bank (ADB) group is composed of all independent African Countries and non-African states, and it has regional and national banks on the African continent. It has a special focus on women and has a WID unit which although relatively new (about 2 years), is making much progress to achieve the integration of women in the Bank's operations. The Unit has assessed various options for increasing African women's access to credit including possibilities of support through Commercial Banks, national and regional financing institutions; NGOs and women specific structures such as Women's World Banking and the Self Employed Women's Association.²⁰ The unit has developed guidelines for integrating women in bank and industrial development projects, in agriculture and health/population sectors. It has also developed a 5-year programme of activities for bi-lateral and multi-lateral assistance covering the priority areas of training, research and studies. Gender analysis training has been initiated for the bank's project officers and a generally heightened consciousness at different staff levels has been reported.²¹

6.6 WOMEN'S BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS

In order to facilitate African women's participation in business including the food processing sector, the ECA (ATRCW) and PTA are promoting the establishment of National and Regional Associations/and Federations on Women entrepreneurs as already discussed.

Following the Nairobi 1991 expert group meeting which recommended the formation of regional associations of women entrepreneurs and its subsequent endorsement by ECA conference of Ministers, ECA (ATRCW) requested member states to establish national associations of women in business in those countries not already having them. As of February 1993, ECA was in contact with some 25 associations on the continent and these are in Angola, Benin, Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Togo, Uganda, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In January 1993, through ECA's facilitation, a Federation of African Women Entrepreneurs (FAWE) was launched. The FAWE Executive Committee plans to meet before the end of 1993 for purposes of developing a Plan of Action. The World bank was reported to be considering possibilities of providing institutional support to FAWE.²²

Before the above mentioned initiatives, women entrepreneurs in West Africa were already organised under the "Organisation of Women Traders and Entrepreneurs" (OWTE) based in Dakar, Senegal. This organisation assisted in the mobilisation of West African women entrepreneurs towards the establishment of FAWE.

For the Eastern and Southern African region, PTA facilitated the formation of the Federation of National Associations of Women in Business in Eastern and Southern Africa as already discussed.

6.7 NATIONAL AND REGIONAL FOOD TECHNOLOGY INSTITUTIONS/FOOD RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

Almost all the African Countries have food technology research institutions e.g., the Ghana Regional Appropriate Technology Industries Services (GRATIS) and the Technology Consulting Centre, Institute of Engineering (Zimbabwe), Centre for Appropriate Technology in Cameroon, and Approtec in Kenya. There are also regional level institutions such as the African Regional Centre for Technology in Dakar, the Rural Industries Innovation Centre in Botswana etc. These institutions generally have no gender focus and they also have financial constraints. Two UNIDO missions to Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Togo observed that "...it was not the technical production side which constituted the main bottleneck: the most common problem was rather a lack of consideration and understanding of socio-economic and cultural conditions and a failure to introduce appropriate support measures to ensure women's long term access to technologies developed and introduced."⁴³

6.8 TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

Various National based Institutions are providing entrepreneurship development, management and technical training to support women's food processing activities.

In addition Regional Institutions such as the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI) are providing entrepreneurship development and management training courses for women entrepreneurs. These courses are held both at the regional institute as well as at country level.

The Pan-African Institute for development (PAID) has regional offices in Cameroon and Zambia and it specialises in entrepreneurship development training with a specific focus on training of trainers. UNIDO cooperated with the Pan-African institute for development, East and Southern Africa (PAID-ESA) in the development of the training manuals and programme for women entrepreneurs in the food processing industry.

6.9 NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

There is a multiplicity of national and regional women's NGOs which are supporting women's food processing activities in Africa through training, credit, and technology development, among other services.

NGO involvement is also evident in the area of research and education on women and the law. For example in Southern Africa, *Women in law in Southern Africa (WILSA)* is active in this field. East Africa has recently launched a similar organisation while initiatives in West Africa have just gone beyond the preparatory stage. There are also national level NGOs involved in the same area and most of them are donor funded e.g., Women Advancement Trust (WAT) in Tanzania, Women's Association for National Development (WAND) in Sierra Leone, 31st December Women's Movement in Ghana, National Women's Lobby Group in Zambia, and Women's Action Group in Zimbabwe.

6.10 BI-LATERAL AND MULTI-LATERAL AGENCIES

UNIDO has developed training materials on women in the food processing industry and is providing training to women in food processing industries in Tanzania and Gambia. Similar training has been requested for Sierra Leone and Malawi. It has also developed food technology manuals for the specific food processing conditions in Ghana.

UNIDO training materials were developed in cooperation with the Pan-African Institute for development, East and Southern Africa, (PAID-ESA).

UNIDO is also providing technical assistance to women's food processing industries including, fisheries, in Namibia, and, has provided financial support for women's entrepreneurship development in some African countries.

UNIFEM is promoting various food production and processing technologies that are specific to women's needs in East, West and Southern Africa such as grinding mills, dehullers and hammer mills for large and small grains, cassava processing technologies for women in some West African States (at Pauma), in Cameroon and palm oil processing and gari processing in Gambia. It is also providing other supportive services such as credit, training in business skills, operation and maintenance of technologies and marketing.

UNIFEM is at a preparatory stage on a capacity building project for young women professionals. This project intends to identify and attach young women University graduates to selected institutions so that they can pick up technical and management experience as well as gender issues and concerns. Already preliminary country studies have been carried out in 5 countries including Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Kenya.

UNICEF's support to women's food processing activities has mainly taken the form of facilitating women's access to credit. The UNICEF office in Ghana has, for instance, assisted women's groups in the rural areas to buy grinding mills and to use them to produce an instant weaning food for babies, both for profit and their own use.⁶⁴ UNICEF also carries out regular updates of the situation of women and children in all the countries of its operation.

EMPRETEC is providing entrepreneurship development training in some African Countries such as in Zimbabwe, Ghana, Cameroon.

The International Labour Organization through its programme Improve Your Business (IYB), is providing financial support to women for their income generating activities and is also providing training in business management skills using very simple manuals.

Also, ILO is currently supporting a project in Senegal on fruit processing and a tomato drying project in Burkina Faso. It is currently making preparations for a regional seminar next year in Dakar on women's working conditions in Industry.

Additionally, ILO has a collaborative technical assistance programme with a Dutch NGO called the Farm Implement and Tools (FIT) programme. FIT intends to focus on women entrepreneurs in food processing in Ghana and Kenya.

Through a recently completed project in Ghana, ILO/UNIDO introduced improved technologies for women covering fish smoking, gari processing, palm/coconut oil and shea butter extraction and groundnut oil extraction, fruit and vegetable processing and fish preservation.⁶⁵ In Kenya an ILO/UNDP small enterprise development programme has led to the development of training materials for food processing, covering both management and technical areas.⁶⁶

United Nation's Economic Commission for Africa, ECA (ATRCW) is playing a very crucial role in facilitating the formation of national and regional associations of women entrepreneurs as already discussed.

The ATRCW also continues to work very closely with national women's machineries for the advancement of women throughout the African continent in lobbying for socio-economic and legal changes to improve the status of the African women.

Additionally, ATRCW is exploring the possibility of establishing an African Bank for women. It has undertaken a study to assess the feasibility of the creation of such a bank. The ECA conference of Ministers of 1993 supported the idea for the establishment of the bank, but recommended further studies.⁶⁷ ATRCW plans to hold an expert group meeting to further deliberate on this issue.

The US Agency for International Development is providing lines of credit to assist women's food processing activities in areas such as fish drying in Senegal. It is also involved in applied research activities for smoked

fish using a fuel efficient stove in Ghana and Senegal. It also intends to carry out applied research in small grains processing particularly in Central Africa and in Sahel countries.

The WORLD BANK has provided special lines of credit to support women's food processing activities particularly in West Central Africa. It also intends to conduct studies on women in the food processing sector in these countries.

Bilateral agencies such as DANIDA, GTZ, NORAD, SIDA, CIDA are also supporting special lines of credit to support women's entrepreneurship activities throughout Africa. For example CIDA in Zimbabwe has established a credit guarantee scheme (50 percent) in order to alleviate women's collateral requirements. It is also sponsoring gender sensitisation training programmes of SADC sector specialists through UNIFEM. ESAMI has been providing this training up to now.

7. CURRENT PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES FOR WOMEN SUITABLE FOR UPGRADING

Various UNIDO, ECA and PTA studies have highlighted both current and new women's food processing activities suitable for upgrading.⁸⁸ Such activities could include more pronounced training efforts, upgrade and in-plant training, or more entrepreneurship development efforts in those areas of the sector anticipated to grow the most in the next five-to-ten years. These activities cover the following areas:

- oil extraction in East and Southern Africa (from groundnuts and sunflower) and Central and West Africa (from palm oil, groundnuts)
- fruit and vegetable processing into chutney, jams, marmalade, juices etc in most of West, North, East and Southern Africa
- Cereal processing through dehullers and hammer mills e.g (maize, sorghum and millet) in most East and Southern African countries and Sahelian countries (sorghum and millet) and West Africa coast countries (maize and rice)
- Cassava processing into gari (Ghana) acheke (Cote d'Ivoire) Chickwangué (Coastal Region) etc in most Central and West African countries
- fish processing in West, Central Africa, North Africa, Eastern Africa, coastal countries as well as Malawi. The main methods of processing used are salting, natural air drying, artificial drying using mechanical smoking or using the chorkor oven in some cases as in Ghana.
- peanut/shear butter (shea tree grows wild in the region South of the Sahel and in the savannas of Sudan and Guinea)
- beer brewing and wine manufacturing
- food catering - restaurants
- butchery and cold storage
- confectionaries
- beekeeping for honey
- dairy products especially in Tanzania.

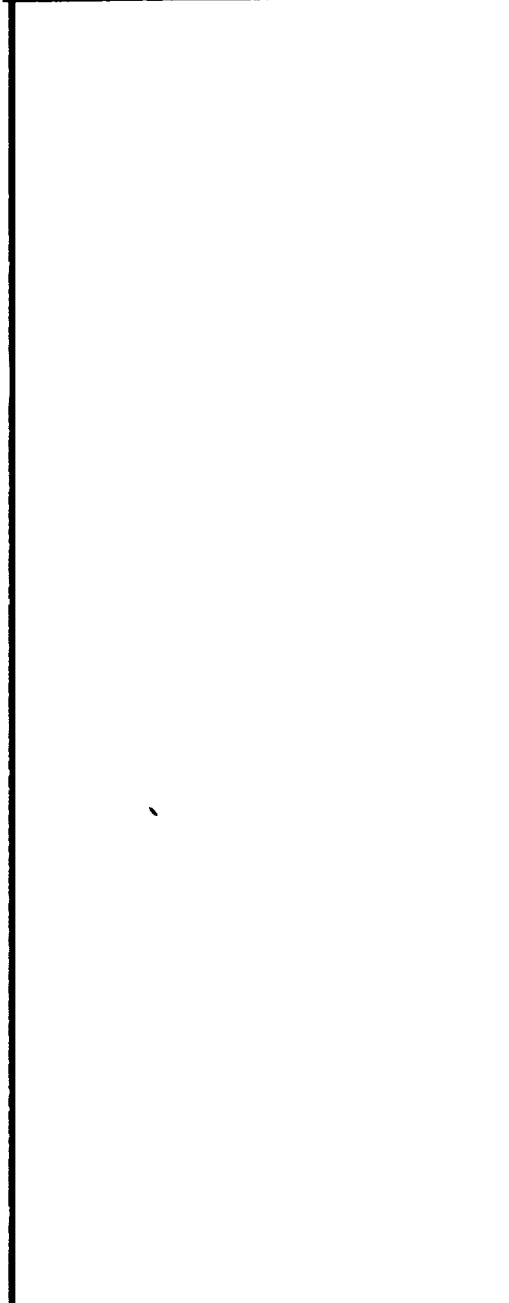
New areas with potential are country-specific and can only be established through country individualized feasibility studies. It can, however, be said that there is a lot of scope for diversifying the products that women are currently producing, especially after all the necessary business factors have been taken into account. For instance, more wine ranges can be produced by introducing new recipes as well as manufacturing from wild fruit, a wider range of confectioneries such as chocolates, sweets and biscuits from cocoa, cocoa butter, peanuts etc can be manufactured; a wide variety of soaps can also be manufactured from tallow and shea butter.

The interventions necessary to upgrade women's involvement in the above-mentioned current activities as well as in new areas with potential are:

- facilitating women's access to, and control of, production resources such as land, credit/finance and technology.
- creating an enabling and production-enhancing environment through removal of women's legal constraints/barriers

- improving/facilitating women's access to business information through strengthening women's participation in, and formation of, business associations as well as through strengthening their linkages with institutions that are already providing this type of information.
- facilitating women's access to management and technical training in relevant business areas.
- facilitating women's access to business extension and advisory services
- facilitating women's access to markets through technical assistance in marketing, training and packaging.

Specific women-in-industry expertise will be required to implement the above mentioned intervention strategies. The policy strategies necessitate cooperation between industrial economists and specialists on women-in-development. Strategies on database development information and research, will require cooperation between statisticians and women-in-development specialists while training strategies necessitate expertise in curriculum development, training, and industrial human resource development. Food industrial economists and women-in-development specialists particularly those who have had experience in gender analysis training will be required for the gender-sensitisation programmes with the banks and food processing industries. On entrepreneurship development, expertise in business and organisational development will be essential. Expertise in business management and administration and marketing will be essential for implementing the marketing strategies while food technologists, sociologists, women in development experts and communication experts will be necessary for the technology-related strategies. Expertise in both business management and finance, and women-in-development or gender issues will be essential for the finance/credit strategies.



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