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African Regional Expert Group Meeting on Women  
in the Food-Processing Industry  
Arusha, Tanzania, 17-20 January 1994

## FINAL REPORT

Prepared by

Integration of Women in Industrial  
Development Unit

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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 AND BACKGROUND**

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 easiest entry points for women into industrial activities in most African countries. 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 the level 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, their employment conditions, access to training and advancement to supervisory positions is 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 policy study and research programmes so that they are equal beneficiaries in all programmes and projects. For this purpose, the Plan of Action spelled out the need to organize expert group meetings/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.

The report of the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) in Agro-Industries organized by UNIDO was submitted to the Eighth Conference of African Ministers of Industry, held in Bujumbura, Burundi, 17-19 September 1989, which subsequently called upon UNIDO to follow-up by organizing 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.

Agenda 21, the United Nations Programme of action, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) which took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, clearly states that full participation of women is essential to the achievement of sustainable development. Similarly environmentally sustainable industrial development cannot be achieved without the informed and active participation of women. Food processing industry sector plays a crucial role in this context as it is the major means for rural development, increasing off-farm employment and providing the transitional means for improving the livelihoods of women.

In line with the above stated mandates, UNIDO organized an Expert Group Meeting on women and the food-processing industry in Africa, in Arusha, Tanzania, 17-20th January 1994. The Expert Group Meeting did not only share ideas and experiences from respective countries but also explored ways to strengthen women's participation in the food-processing industry for more sustainable development.

## **1.1 Objectives**

The objectives of the EGM was to critically examine women's participation in the food-processing sector and to work out a set of practical recommendations regarding policy, programmes and projects that will facilitate and increase African women's participation in the sector.

The recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting will provide various categories of women's organizations, planners and policy-makers in governments, bilateral and multilateral development agencies, national machineries for the advancement of women and national and international non-governmental organizations with practical suggestions to improve the situation of women in food-processing industries as well as with concrete programmes and projects to be followed up at national, regional and international levels.

The recommendations will provide guidance to UNIDO on its activities related to the promotion of food processing industries in Africa and the effective consideration of women's role and participation in the process.

The recommendations will furthermore provide valuable background information and constitute a valuable input of UNIDO to the deliberations to the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women to be held in Dakar, 1994, in preparation for the Fourth World Women's Conference in 1995.

## **2. ATTENDANCE AND ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING**

### **2.1 Attendance**

The EGM was attended by 13 experts from Africa, namely, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda<sup>1</sup>. The experts were either 1) currently involved in the food-processing activities as producers/ factory workers/entrepreneurs/managers; 2) policy-makers at the Government level; or involved in financial institutions as well as agro-industry related associations.

In addition, 20 more participants attended the EGM as observers who were actively involved in the deliberations as well as formulation of recommendations of the EGM. (ANNEX 1 contains the full list of participants to the Expert Group Meeting).

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<sup>1</sup> Two experts were invited to attend at the Expert Group Meeting from Tanzania.

## **2.2 Election of Office Bearers (Bureau)**

The meeting elected the following as members of the Bureau:

Chairperson	Ms. Rachael Lugembe and Ms. Pricilar Olekambaine (Tanzania) <sup>2</sup>
Vice Chairperson	Ms. Aminata Ndiaye (Senegal)
Rapporteur	Ms. Shafika Saleh Nasser (Egypt)

## **3. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS**

### **3.1 OPENING**

The Expert Group Meeting was opened by a welcoming note of Ms. R. Lugembe, Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children introduced to the group of experts the EGM's objectives and urged participants to come up with concrete strategies on how to overcome the constraints of women in the food processing industry. With the remark thanking UNIDO for co-organizing and co-financing the Expert Group Meeting with the Government of Tanzania, she warmly welcomed the participants to the EGM.

Honourable Professor Nicas G. Mahinda (MP), Deputy Minister, Ministry for Industry and Trade, officially delivered an opening statement. Referring the central role of African women as producer of 80 percent of the food consumed in Africa providing 60 percent of the agricultural labour as well as entrepreneurs and employees in food-processing industry, he welcomed the initiative to organize the EGM on the issue pertinens of women in Africa. In addition to the general constraints any entrepreneur face, the overview of the gender-specific problems was made with respect to accessing land, credit, business information, technologies, marketing, and training. Although many African countries have made much progress regarding the promotion of equality between men and women, women particularly in the informal sector are constrained by the restrictive legal and regulatory environment procedures concerning registration of enterprises and ownership of properties such as land and buildings. He urged participants to come up with concrete strategies and recommendations for alleviating these constraints so as to increase women's participation in the food-processing sector.

Acting Chief of the Integration of Women in Industrial Development Unit of UNIDO reiterated the importance of the Expert Group Meeting to UNIDO. First of all, the recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting aims at the provision of practical suggestions to improve the situation of women in food-processing industries as well as with concrete programmes/projects to be followed up at national, regional and international levels. These recommendations will be a basis for UNIDO to prepare our inputs to the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women/Preparatory Meeting to the Fourth World Conference on

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<sup>2</sup> Ms. Lugembe, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children, was succeeded by Ms. Olekambaine, Director of Division for Women and Children's Affairs, of the same Ministry due to other commitment.

Women, to be held in Dakar, 1994. At the same time, the outcomes of this Expert Group Meeting will provide guidance to UNIDO for its activities related to the promotion of food-processing industries in Africa and the effective consideration of women's role and participation in the process.

Having reviewed briefly the history of the activities for women in development, a reference was made to a global typology study, *"Women in Manufacturing - Participation Patterns, Determinants and Trends"* which UNIDO completed in 1993. The study creates a global typology of women's involvement in industrial sector with an analysis of socio-economic variables characterizing countries' groupings. It also includes forward-looking analysis of issues, constraints, and challenges surrounding women's economic and industrial participation to the year 2000. Though the study gives evidence of the crucial productive contribution women make, regardless of the stage or type of economic development a country has pursued, their participation has taken place on unequal terms.

As contained in Agenda 21, environmentally sustainable industrial development cannot be achieved without the informed and active participation of women. UNIDO as evidenced by its restructuring has affirmed this and has given issues pertaining to the integration of women in industrial development a priority in its medium term plan. She urged the participants to come up with concrete recommendations on how to better integrate women's concerns in the food processing industry.

### **3.2 PRESENTATION OF THE BACKGROUND PAPER PREPARED BY MS. MERCY DIKITO**

There is high women's involvement in the food processing industry on the African continent and this is attributed to the relatively low barriers of entry due to low investment requirements, low education and skills requirements, and the congruence between these activities and women's traditional reproductive role. The incomes realised are low due to the gender-specific constraints that women face with regards to women's access to land and other forms of immovable property, credit, technology, training and business advisory and extension services, marketing and business information.

Women's food processing entrepreneurship activities, are in both the formal and informal sectors with high women's predomination in the informal sector. The informal sector is the largest employer of women. Women's ownership of formal sector food-processing industries is limited. Women's participation in the industry is influenced by socio-cultural- religious factors, legal factors and educational factors.

As formal sector employees, women in the industry are concentrated in low level, low paying jobs in the skilled and unskilled categories and their absence is conspicuous in decision making positions. They have limited advancement/promotional opportunities, are victims of sexual harassment, lack child care facilities at work places, and may experience postural problems as a result of long standing hours leading to increased varicose veins. There is also a risk of low birth weight of infants as a result of long standing hours, heavy lifting and extremes of temperature and humidity.



The governments' institutional framework cover Ministries of Industry and Trade, Regional Economic Groupings, Institutions for the Development of Small-Scale Enterprises and National Women's Machineries. With the exception of women's machineries, the major weakness of the institutions is that they generally have no women focus. Women's advancement policies and sectoral priorities on the other hand are not closely linked with industrial and overall development policies. Private sector institutions such as Chambers of Commerce, do not service the business needs of women as most women are not members. Women generally have problems accessing credit from the Commercial Banks. Other forms of support through traditional forms of credit, women's financing intermediaries, the African Development Bank and Women's Business Associations, national and regional training and technology institutions, NGOs, bilateral and multilateral agencies were also highlighted.

There is a need to identify women's food-processing activities suitable for upgrading. Upgrading can be achieved through improving women's access to technology, credit, information, and through training in management and technical skills including entrepreneurship development particularly in the areas that are anticipated to grow most within the next five years. Country specific feasibility studies could identify the specific activities for upgrading as well as the requisite upgrading activities to be implemented.

### **3.2.1 Discussion of the background paper**

The EGM emphasized that the starting point for improving women's participation in the food-processing industry is to have clear cut policies that are gender responsive with respect to women's entrepreneurship activities as well as employment conditions at both national and international levels. The policies should be linked with various sectors and should be translated into practical sectoral activities. The implementation of women's multisectoral activities must be coordinated and monitored through multi-sectoral committees.

Women's domination of micro and small-scale home based enterprises particularly those in the informal sector should not be seen as a reflection of women's incompetence, for this is a result of the socio-economic environment that they operate within. It is thus necessary to introduce measures that can transform women's operations from home based micro enterprises to medium- and large-scale industrial concerns. To this effect, training women in relevant management and technical skills, facilitating women's access to business information, markets, credit and technology is most important. Education for girls with an emphasis on science and technical areas is also a pre-requisite to achieve women's equal participation in the food-processing sub-sector both as entrepreneurs and employees.

The introduction of time and labour saving domestic technologies in order to reduce women's workload is most essential in order to create time for women to meaningfully participate in the food-processing industry. For as long as women are expected to juggle their multiple roles unaided, time constraints will continue to be one of their major impediments.

Food-processing at whatever level is value adding and is the basis of industrialization. Promoting women's integration in the sub-sector therefore increases their income and participation in the industrial process.

### **3.3 COUNTRY PRESENTATIONS**

Each expert was given 15 minutes to highlight the major issues in their country paper. The presentations focused on the constraints that women in food processing industries face as both entrepreneurs and employees and on recommendations to alleviate them. Major issues concerning women as entrepreneurs evolved around the policy framework, women's lack of access to credit/finance, technology, training, information and marketing .

#### **3.3.1 Constraints of women entrepreneurs in the food-processing industry**

##### **3.3.1.1 Policy framework**

The policy environment is most essential in order to create an enabling environment for women to actively participate in overall development and in food processing industries in particular. This issue was emphasized in the presentations of the countries such as Cameroon, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda. To this effect, the following was recommended;

- National machineries for the advancement of women should have clear cut policies on women's advancement and these policies should be linked to overall and industrial development policies;
- Women's Unit should be established in all ministries in order to minimize problems of implementation and coordination as recommended by the OAU;
- there should be inter ministerial coordination on all matters pertaining to women's issues;
- governments should take affirmative action measures in order to facilitate women's participation in the food processing industry.

##### **3.3.1.2 Finance/Credit**

Lack of/limited access to credit is the major problem for women as mentioned in most of the experts' presentation (Guinea, Ethiopia, Mali, Uganda, Nigeria, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire and Malawi). This largely accounts for women's domination of the informal and micro- and small-scale enterprise sectors where the barriers to entry are relatively low. Women's lack of access to credit also affects their access to technology, land ownership, etc.

Recommendations suggested include improving women's access to credit through the introduction of appropriate credit programmes e.g. through women's NGO's and intermediaries as has been achieved through Uganda Women's Finance and Credit Trust (a women's NGO) and through disseminating information on sources of credit.

##### **3.3.1.3 Technology**

Lack of appropriate technologies is a major constraint that reduces women's competitiveness in the food processing industry. This is caused by factors such as lack of access to credit to purchase necessary technologies, lack of information on types of

technologies, their sources as well as the terms of their transfer. Other factors are women's lack of access to training in machine operation, maintenance and repairs as well as non women's involvement in technology design and development resulting in most technologies developed being socially and culturally inappropriate for use by women. Use of appropriate technologies increases production, increases product quality and marketing opportunities. lightens the workload especially for women and it also alleviates boredom and drudgery. Studies carried by the Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre demonstrated the heavy women's workload of 11-14 hours a day.

Recommendations to improve this situation included improving women's access to appropriate technologies through programmes to improve their access to credit, increased women education and training with an emphasis on scientific and technical subjects and training in management and technical skills in machine operation, maintenance and repairs and through upgrading traditional existing food processing technologies.

#### **3.3.1.4 Training**

Lack of expertise in management and technical areas as well as on how to start a business is also a major women's constraint as identified in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mali, Senegal and Uganda. This situation is further compounded by women's low education and high illiteracy levels.

Recommendations to improve this situation emphasized the promotion of women's illiteracy programmes, promotion of education for girls programmes, the promotion of exchange visits for women involved in the food processing industry, entrepreneurship development training for women, establishing skills deficit of women entrepreneurs and facilitating their access to requisite training in technical and management areas as well as on how to start a business. Other suggested measures include the setting up of business and advisory consultancy services for women as is being done through the Federal Institute of Research in Nigeria. In countries where there is no industrial culture such as in Mali, industrialist should first go through industrial school in order to develop an industrial culture.

#### **3.3.1.5 Information**

Lack of business information is most essential for any business person to survive in the business world. Due to socio-cultural factors and other factors, women's access to business information is very limited resulting in most women not knowing viable business ventures, institutions that provide credit, technologies available as well as terms for their transfer, sources of raw materials, marketing opportunities, etc. This problem was highlighted particularly by the experts from Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria and Uganda.

As a result of the discussions, improving women's access to business information will necessitate;

- the facilitation of relevant food processing information at national, regional and international levels;

- the promotion of exchange visits among women food processors;
- accessing business information from world markets and disseminating it to women entrepreneurs;
- facilitating regular meetings among women food processors for exchange of information;
- conducting feasibility studies to determine feasible business areas, sources of raw materials, marketing opportunities, potential, etc.

### **3.3.1.6 Marketing**

Experts from Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda reported that the marketing of women's products is often problematic partly due to lack of information about marketing opportunities, poor product quality and competitiveness, and shortage of raw materials.

The recommendations that were suggested emphasized the need to;

- create the industry's backward and forward linkages;
- research aimed at improving product development, quality and supply of raw materials;
- promote joint ventures between rural women food producers and primary food producers and urban women entrepreneurs and secondary processors in order to facilitate marketing of women's products;
- organize Africa regional trade fairs at least once a year in order to facilitate marketing of women's products;
- hold export oriented exhibitions outside the Africa region at least once a year

### **3.3.2 Constraints of women employees in the food-processing industry**

As employees, women in the food processing industry have limited employment opportunities. They mainly occupy low level, low paying jobs in the unskilled and semi-skilled categories mostly as casual workers. This is mostly due to women's low levels of education. Women are also often excluded from decision making positions, suffer de-facto and de-jure discrimination which include limited promotional and advancement opportunities. The examples cases are reported by the experts from Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Namibia and Senegal. They often suffer from poor working conditions which include long working hours in wet and unhealthy premises for at least 10 - 12 hours a day (Senegal and Namibia), lack of child care facilities at the work places and lack of meaningful maternity benefits. The long working hours leave the women with very little time for reproductive activities as well as for self advancement and literacy courses .

Education for girls is a prerequisite for their equal participation in the food processing industry both as entrepreneurs and employees. Time and labour saving domestic technologies could assist in affording girls more time for study thereby reducing their preoccupation with domestic chores.

### **3.3.3 Discussion of Country Presentations**

In the plenary discussion that followed the country presentations, participants agreed that the problems of women in the food processing industries in Africa are similar with variations only in terms of intensity. It was further agreed to focus discussions on agro-food industries and not food processing industries only as the two are closely inter-related.

Various phases of industrial development starting from home based micro-enterprises to small-, medium- and large-scale enterprises were discussed. Emphasis was placed on the importance of acknowledging the existence of these production categories as women entrepreneurs are not a homogeneous group but have capabilities and problems that are peculiar to them depending on where they are on the continuum of home based micro-enterprises to large scale enterprises. The focus should thus be on the constraints and potentials of women at various levels of production as well as specific sets of recommendations essential to achieve the requisite transformation to industrial growth and development. Various examples of support measures to achieve this transition were given including the case of a *Zambian woman entrepreneur in the food industry who through improved access to new technology, training and packaging has moved from producing 8 bottles of jam per day to 200-300 bottles per hour.*

The required measures were discussed with a view to achieve the transformation of women's enterprises from home-based micro to small-medium and large scale enterprises.

- the introduction of time and labour saving technologies in order to alleviate women's workload thereby creating time for them to meaningfully participate in agro-food processing industries;
- improving their access to credit, to business information, e.g., on affordable and available technologies and the terms of their transfer, training, marketing, credit etc.;
- international organization such as UNIDO should provide information on existing technologies as well as facilitate their transfer and prepare an inventory of existing appropriate technologies;
- conducting feasibility studies to determine potential areas of production, raw materials availability, marketing opportunities etc.;
- improving women's access to education;
- facilitating multi-sectoral coordination through multi-sectoral committees;
- the establishment of women's units within various ministries as recommended by the Lagos Plan of Action.

In order to provide the above mentioned supportive services necessary to achieve the transition, Governments, national women's machineries, women's NGOs, women in business associations, regional and international organizations all have an important role to play. The Government's role is that of setting the policy framework and environment while that of national women's machineries is of lobbying for support and attention to women's issues as well as inputting into sectoral plans. Women's needs cannot be addressed by the women's machinery alone as they are multi-sectoral hence the need for focal points in different ministries to act as watch dogs as well as to sensitize others. A multi-sectoral approach in the provision of requisite support services was therefore advocated.

Relevant women's NGOs and women in business associations should complement national women's machineries efforts in lobbying and defending the interests of women as well as to facilitate women's access to credit and other business support services. Women's NGOs also play an important role at grassroots level not only in linking women with possible donors but also in creating women's awareness to other business support services.

Regional and International Organizations should strengthen the capacity of individual women entrepreneurs, national and regional women in business associations and other relevant institutions that have the potential to provide business support services to women. UNIDO and other relevant organizations were thus requested to fund feasibility studies on women's agro-food specific activities as well as assist with technology development, transfer, promotion and dissemination efforts.

### **3.4 PRESENTATION BY RESOURCE PERSONS**

Three resource persons presented papers on relevant topics to the EGM. The first presentation was on a regional multi-purpose pilot project financed by UNIDO and IFAD in Mali and Burkina Faso while the other two resource persons' papers were on environmentally sound and energy saving technologies in Africa.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) as an observer also made a presentation after the resource persons.

#### **3.4.1 The Africa Regional Multi-Purpose Platform Project in Mali and Burkina Faso by Mr. R. Imboden**

Mr. Imboden is the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) of the project, "Development and dissemination of appropriate food processing equipment for rural women in sub-saharan Africa", has been implemented by UNIDO in co-operation with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) since a little more than a year and for the duration of two years. The objective is to find the most appropriate technologies and social organizational modes for the installation of mills and dehullers in rural villages. The project has a multipurpose platform consisting of a dehuller and grinding mill, oil press, generator and motor.

An integrated approach to village development has been introduced by extending the use of the pilot plant for other community income generating activities such as:

- the production of electricity for light and sale to artisans involved in carpentry, welding etc. Electricity is also used for battery charging;
- pumping and distribution of water in the village. The provision of electricity and water are essential innovations to alleviate women's workload;
- oil extraction from groundnuts, palm oil, sesame and shea-butter. The shea-butter oil is used for running the motor instead of diesel and it is also used for making candles and soap;
- the plant also provides energy for moving other machinery such as straw cutters and saws for cutting timber.

The presentation introduced an innovative approach of promoting viable women's income generating activities in an integrated manner and also in a way that involves the whole community. The project is also a demonstration of how to reduce women's workload and drudgery and at the same time create time for them to participate in other important activities, e.g., literacy courses.

### **3.4.2 Environmentally Sound and Energy Saving Technologies, by Ms. N. Musonda**

Ms. Musonda is a food-technologist with an extensive experience in the field of nutrition, food technology and agriculture in Africa. She acted as a trainer of food technology within the framework of the UNIDO's Training Programme for Women Entrepreneurs in the Food Processing Industry and also played an active role in the pilot fruit-juice processing project for women in Zambia. Based on her wide experience in food-technology in general, she detailed in her presentation the global environmental and energy problems, their causes and effects on people and the environment. As women make the transition from home based food processing to food processing at the income generating level, they will use more energy resources thereby contributing to the global environmental problem.

In order to reduce environmental pollution and the health problems associated with pollution, the criteria for the selection of appropriate technologies should not only emphasize the cultural, social and economic dimension, but should in addition emphasize that such technologies should be environmentally sound and energy saving. Similarly, the adaptation of technologies to particular situations should include considerations for the technology to become environmentally sound and energy saving. Technology choice, adaptation and dissemination should establish the energy source of the technology, how much of the energy source is available now, in the future and in the long term, whether or not the energy source is perpetual, renewable or non-renewable, whether there can be improved efficient energy utilization, an analysis of the chemicals used in food preservation as well as their effects on people, animals and the environment. Finally possibilities of using waste products for something else must always be explored and a combined effort by all relevant people including women must be adopted in order to curb the escalating global environmental and energy problem.

### **3.4.3 Environmentally Sound and Energy Saving Technologies for Sustainable Industrial Development in Africa by Mr. J. J. Kojo Asiedu**

Mr. Asiedu is Officer-in-Charge of the Research and Technological Consulting Services Division of the African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT) in Dakar, Senegal. He has been involved in a number of technological development projects in Africa also with UNIDO. In the presentation of the EGM, he outlined the present situation of the manufacturing industry in Africa specifically the food processing industry. It plays a leading role in the socio-economic development of Africa as evidenced by the fact that the sector accounts for 60 percent of value added in all African manufacturing.

In order to curb the global environmental and energy problem, food processing technologies must not only be appropriate for the technical, economic and social conditions in which they are used, but should also be environmentally sound and energy saving in a given community at any given time. The technology should use local materials and energy, should make use of locally understood technologies, should use techniques already proven, should ensure that local requirements of climate or geography are met, should be dependent on raw materials availability and market conditions and should cause no or as little damage to the environment as possible. It should also minimize depletion and pollution by using renewable resources through built in waste minimization, recycling and reuse. Finally such technologies should liberate human beings from boring, degrading, excessively heavy or dirty work.

An investigation of technological choices should address questions of the probable rate of capacity utilization and its effects on production costs, the relative importance of labour, capital and other production factors in the cost of each alternative, how each alternative affect production and marketing, the infrastructure and support requirements of each alternative technology and the management implications as well as the socio-economic considerations that may affect suppliers, markets or customers. Product factors such as purity, standardization, stability and degree of processing will also affect the choice of technologies. Energy options must also be taken into consideration.

### **3.4.4 Organisation of African Unity (OAU)**

Ms. Teriba who is Women's Affairs Officer of OAU informed the EGM the activities of the OAU's Women's Unit. The Unit itself is relatively new and was only established in 1989. Some of the women related food-processing activities that the unit has undertaken, include the holding of a symposium on "African women, food self sufficiency and Africa's Economic Recovery" in 1991 with the support of UNIDO and various UN organizations and a joint study with the ECA, INSTRAW on African women in the informal sector which came up with guidelines on how to support women's informal sector activities.

Women's food processing activities are mainly in the informal sector and women's constraints largely pertain to the prohibitive legal and regulatory environment, lack of/limited access to credit, marketing, information, training and technology. The EGM's recommendations should cover the policy framework, the creation of an enabling environment, review and change of all laws that inhibit women, and the establishment of an African data base. She urged the experts and observers at the EGM to lobby and ensure that



the meeting's recommendations are adopted by relevant authorities and are implemented. Finally experts should familiarize themselves with the Africa Economic Treaty documents.

### **3.4.5 Discussions on Resource Persons Presentations**

The questions and discussions that followed the above mentioned four presentations mainly focused on the multi-purpose platform pilot project in Mali and Burkina Faso. The questions raised included concern regarding the economic viability of the project, cost effectiveness of the mills, project sustainability and whether or not it can be replicated.

The resource person explained that economic viability and cost effectiveness of the mills can only be realized if they are linked with other income generating elements such as electric generation, oil expression etc. The size of the village also influences cost effectiveness and viability and explains why the pilot project is only providing a mill for a village with about one thousand people.

The replication and sustainability of the project can only be fully determined after the pilot phase, after observing what happens to the project when women and communities take over.

### **3.5 WORKING GROUPS TO FORMULATE RECOMMENDATIONS AND FOLLOW UP ACTION**

In order to come up with recommendations and areas of follow up, participants were divided into two working groups, **Group A and Group B**, to work on the pertinent topics agreed upon in relation to women's participation in agro-food industries. After much general discussion, the topics which were selected covered the critical areas of information, training, technology, marketing, finance/credit and safety and quality control. Each group selected its chairperson and rapporteur as follows:

	<b>Coordinator</b>	<b>Rapporteur</b>
Group A	Ms. F. Mariko (Mali)	Ms. I. Wanendeya (Uganda)
Group B	Ms. L. Kalilani (Malawi)	Ms. N. Musonda (Zambia:Res.Person)

The groups deliberated on the selected topics for a day and the results of the two working groups were synthesized by a drafting committee comprising of rapporteur and other members of the two working groups before presentation, consideration and adoption of the same in plenary.

The following is a summary of the recommendations of the two working groups;

Recommendations with respect to training emphasized the need for training needs assessment of women in the food processing industry, in both the formal and informal sectors; training of women entrepreneurs in the identified areas and institutional capacity building and strengthening of associations of women in business in order to provide institutional support services to women.

With respect to information, gender disaggregated data on the situation of women in industry should be collected by relevant government ministries, and other relevant institutions: women in business associations should establish networks with national and regional level business institutions in order to facilitate their collection, processing and dissemination of business information.

Technology and safety recommendations emphasized the need for collaboration between national level technology institutes and women's NGO's and women's ministries in order to foster women's participation as end users in technology design, development, promotion and dissemination; the improvement of traditional technologies to suit the business environment; training of women in technology operation, maintenance; and the introduction of technologies that are environmentally sound, time and energy saving.

Marketing recommendations emphasized the need to improve the backward and forward linkages; assistance with research for product development, quality control and presentation; holding of exhibitions for marketing; improving linkages between small scale producers and large scale producers in order to increase the awareness of small scale entrepreneurs on standards, carrying out of research by relevant research institutions on storage, packaging, and on quality control of traditionally processed food.

Infrastructural considerations covered the provision of essential services such as electricity, roads, water and sanitation facilities.

Finance and credit recommendations stressed institutional strengthening of women's NGOs to strengthen their capacity to provide credit to women; the introduction of deliberate government measures to facilitate women's access to credit; creation and strengthening of women's consultancy services in order to provide business advisory and consultancy services to women; gender sensitization training of staff in commercial banks and requesting financial institutions to make special financial measures to benefit women.

Policy related recommendations concerned the setting up of an enabling environment by government through formulating clear cut policies on women's advancement and ensuring their implementation across the sectors.

### **3.6 CLOSING CEREMONY**

#### **3.6.1 Summary of the General Debate and Group Discussions**

The Rapporteur summarized the EGM's deliberations. In her introduction, she stated that although Africa is experiencing serious food shortages, there is also considerable food wastage resulting in starvation and malnutrition. Africa's problem is further compounded by the debt problem and economic structural adjustment programmes that most African countries are going through.

The promotion of women's participation in food-processing industries is one of the most important strategies to overcome the above stated problems. In order to achieve this, the

constraints that women face in the areas of accessing credit, training, technology, information and marketing must be addressed. Deliberate steps to reduce women's workload must be also be taken in order to create time for them to meaningfully participate in the industry.

Specific measures to address these constraints should emphasize training in technical and management areas and in entrepreneurship development and education for girls with an emphasis on science and technical areas. Women's access to technology must be improved through credit and information accessibility and through introduction of domestic technologies so as to create time for girls to study. Women's access to other essential resources such as credit must be improved through the introduction of special concessions for women by commercial banks and through capacity building of those women's NGOs that are already providing credit to women. Women's marketing opportunities must be improved through increased access to information on marketing opportunities, sources of raw material and technology, and through regional and international fairs. Women's lack of information can be overcome through feasibility studies and through facilitating their networking capacities with already existing national, regional and international business institutions.

### **3.6.2 Closing Statements**

#### **3.6.2.1 Statement by Ms. M. A. Martin, Acting Chief, Integration of Women in Industrial Development Unit, UNIDO**

First of all, UNIDO expressed gratitude to the Minister of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children for her presence, the Government of Tanzania, particularly the Ministry of Community Development, Women's affairs and Children for co-hosting the EGM and providing the facilities for the meeting. She noted that constraints and obstacles of women in agro-food industries had been discussed and that there had been an emphatic resolution that a lot more still need to be done to increase women's participation in this sub-sector.

With respect to the EGM's recommendations, she observed that the recommendations had focused on six main areas of intervention aimed at building national capacities at various levels. The adopted EGM's recommendations provide governments, UNIDO and others with a clear mandate and guidance in integrating women in agro-food industries. She hoped that the recommendations will also be followed up by the various governments, organizations and institutions and that there will be an exchange of information and feedback relating to implementation.

#### **3.6.2.2 Statement by Hon. Makinda (MP), the Minister of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children**

She briefly reviewed the history of the EGM stating that the idea of holding this meeting was conceived in 1989. She expressed the significance that the Government of Tanzania attaches to the meeting and looked forward to implementing the meeting's recommendations.

It was repeatedly emphasized that the food-processing industry is an important part of any country and its importance is getting more pronounced because of the serious economic situation that Africa is facing, partly due to aid conditionalities. The economic structural

adjustment programmes inspite of their good intentions are increasing the suffering of vulnerable segments of the society.

Although African Governments under the OAU Charter and the Lagos Plan of Action have developed specific strategies to deal with Africa's poverty and underdevelopment, a lot still need to be done. For example in Tanzania, although much has been done to improve women's situation, various constraints such as finance and socio-cultural factors still hinder progress. It is hoped that the meeting is the beginning of much collaboration to improve women's participation in the food processing industry and thanked UNIDO and the Tanzanian Government for co-hosting the meeting. Referring to the power-failure for three days during the EGM period which caused inconveniences to the EGM, she illustrated the difficult situation of industrial activities which is rooted in the overall underdevelopment of the country and it particularly affects women's participation in food-processing industries.

### **3.6.2.3 Statement on behalf of Participants**

A participants' representative expressed gratitude to the Government of Tanzania and UNIDO for co-hosting the meeting. She commended UNIDO's efforts to integrate women in industrial development processes as women's issues have for a long time not been allowed to feature in development programmes. African women should go upward from small entrepreneurs and low level workers in industries. In this context, the EGM's recommendations, if implemented, are capable of positively transforming this situation.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

##### *Preamble*

Africa's population is estimated to be around 870 million by the year 2000. Women of Africa are responsible for almost 80% of agricultural and food production, yet few women are involved in studying agricultural sciences, or handling medium-sized food-processing industries.

In 1984, women of Africa gathered here in Arusha at a regional preparatory conference for the World Conference held in Nairobi 1985, and Arusha strategies were adopted.

Now we gather again in Arusha for the African Regional Expert Group Meeting on Women in the Food-Processing Industry, organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) in co-operation with the Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children of the Government of United Republic of Tanzania.

We, the participants of this Expert Group Meeting,

Having reviewed the socio-cultural and other constraints women are facing and the achievements reached in the food-processing industry in Africa;

Having considered the global macro-economic environment and the impact of structural adjustment programmes in the African countries;

Reaffirming the important role women play and substantial contribution women make to the food-processing industry in Africa particularly within the context of a food production cycle for environmentally sound and sustainable development;

Recognizing the need for the review and monitoring of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women, the Abuja Declaration on Participatory Development: the Role of Women in Africa in the 1990s and Agenda 21 in particular Chapter 24 "Global Action for Women Towards Sustainable and Equitable Development", in the preparation of inputs to the Fifth African Regional Conference on Women/Preparatory Meeting to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Dakar, November 1994;

Taking note and commending UNIDO's efforts to promote the participation of women in the food-processing industry in Africa,

Recognizing the usefulness of setting-up of multi-disciplinary focal points at national level in order to promote, monitor and evaluate progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of this Expert Group Meeting;

Convinced of the urgent need for further measures to be adopted in this sector at national, regional and international level by planners and policy-makers in governments, national machineries for the advancement of women, women's organizations, national and

international Non-Governmental Organizations, and bilateral and multilateral development agencies;

Having Identified the following subjects as priority of interventions:

1. Information and Communication
2. Training
3. Development and Use of Technology
4. Finance and Credit
5. Marketing and Products Safety
6. Infrastructure.

Have adopted the following recommendations.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION**

1. Governments should direct ministries and other institutions to collect, process and disseminate industry-related information and data in a gender disaggregated manner;
2. National governments are requested to produce an inventory of agricultural products accessible to women in order to identify how those products and their by-products could be developed by micro-and small and medium scale industries.
3. National women's business associations should take the initiative to collaborate with business institutions such as Chambers of Commerce and other organizations, for exchange of information on available training programmes and other industrial support services.
4. National industrial support organizations should be urged to collaborate with women entrepreneurs associations and encourage their participation and membership for maximum access to their services.
5. Industry-related information emanating from the UN system and other relevant bodies should be widely disseminated up to the women at grass-root level. For this purpose, existing institutional networks should be reviewed to improve their information dissemination procedure.
6. UNIDO, together with other international and relevant regional organizations, should provide women in business associations with assistance in the institutional capacity building and strengthening so as to obtain required business advise and information services.
7. As a follow-up to the global typology study on the role and participation of women in manufacturing, UNIDO should carry out a regional typology study for Africa in order to identify the patterns, emerging trends and determinants of women's participation in industry. This information will be used to determine the type and level of assistance each country needs in order to enhance the participation and integration of women in industry in Africa.

## **TRAINING**

- 1. Gender sensitization programmes should be developed and organized at the national and regional levels for line ministries, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as business and training institutions.**
- 2. Governments are urged to make gender considerations an integral part of their industrial development plans. In this respect, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at the regional level should promote the integration of gender issues, policies, and programmes developed in member states in relation to industrial development.**
- 3. In order to achieve sustainable human resources development, governments should provide equal opportunity for education and training to women in scientific and technological fields. Governments are also requested to nominate women to attend training programmes.**
- 4. UNIDO and other relevant agencies, in collaboration with appropriate national level training and other institutions, should facilitate the study of training needs assessment for women in the agro- and food-processing industry in both the formal and informal sectors.**
- 5. UNIDO should, in collaboration with the existing regional and national institutions and organizations, promote and conduct training for entrepreneurs as well as trainers in agro- and food-industries using the UNIDO's integrated approach or other training materials.**

## **TECHNOLOGY**

- 1. National and regional technology institutions should collaborate with ministries of women's affairs and women NGOs in order to foster the participation of women in the design, development and promotion and dissemination of food technologies.**
- 2. The introduction of technologies should be accompanied by proper training in technical operation, maintenance and repair.**
- 3. The technologies to be introduced for use by women should be environmentally sound and energy-/time-saving. The choice of such technologies should be made in consultation with women as users and adaptation of such equipment should be made to suit local conditions.**
- 4. Existing traditional technologies and non-traditional technologies should be identified, improved and/or upgraded by national, regional and international institutions to conform to the present business environment and to market demands in quality and standards.;**
- 5. National governments and international institutions should provide funds and technical assistance for the introduction of alternative and renewable sources of energy in the food-processing/agro-industries.**

## **CREDIT AND FINANCE**

- 1. International and regional financial institutions, such as the African Development Bank, should make greater efforts to support the establishment of intermediary financial institutions to facilitate provision of finance and credit for women, particularly those engaged in small- and medium-scale food-processing activities;**
- 2. Government should encourage the establishment of financial institutions and programmes using alternative approaches to provide credit and support services to rural women engaged in agro-industries;**
- 3. National women's machineries, in collaboration with other relevant institutions, should ensure gender-sensitization of loan operators at banks in their dealing with women entrepreneurs. They should also ensure that non-discriminatory laws are enforced and that women are made aware of their rights;**
- 4. Governments should be urged to evolve national policy on women in development issues particularly addressing all problems of access to credit and other productive resources and ensure its implementation by the relevant sectors;**
- 5. Regional and sub-regional economic institutions which have or are considering establishment of special lines of credit for women are urged to consider allocating special funds for support of women's activities in agro-industries. Institutions such as the African Development Bank are specially urged to target women in agro-industries in their lines of credit on industrial development.**

## **MARKETING AND PRODUCT SAFETY**

- 1. Marketing training should include packaging and presentation of products towards better quality and competitiveness;**
- 2. An enabling environment should be created in order to enhance backward and forward linkages among food-processing enterprises of various scales;**
- 3. The Organization of African Unity (OAU) should encourage member states to relax tariffs to allow freer movement of packaged food products between member states;**
- 4. National institutions are urged to disseminate the information that would lead to improving the quality, shelf life and the safety of processed food products;**
- 5. Entrepreneurs in agro-industries should be encouraged to work with various standards institutions to improve the quality of their products and to maintain high international standards;**



6. Governments should set standards of quality, packaging and labelling, encourage and direct entrepreneurs to apply them;

7. Governments and local standard institutions should follow *Codex Alimentarius* and provide information to entrepreneurs on pesticides and additives to food that have been banned in other countries, and on the dangers of use of the chemicals to the users.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

1. National governments should provide roads, water, energy and other infrastructural facilities to promote productive activities in rural areas;

2. Innovative technologies and various facilities should be developed so as to provide simultaneously basic necessities as water and electricity for small-scattered communities when government do not have the means to make such facilities available to them.

### *Conclusion*

The Expert Group Meeting specifically recommends that UNIDO should make concerted efforts to mobilize human and financial resources for the implementation of the recommendations which fall under its mandate.

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## ANNEX 2

### African Regional Expert Group Meeting on Women in Food-Processing Industries, Arusha, Tanzania, 17 - 20 January, 1994.

#### PROGRAMME

- 17 January**      9:00    Registration
- 9:30      Opening Ceremony
- Welcoming address by Ms. R. Lugembe, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children;
  - Opening address by Mr. Nicas G. Mahinda, (MP.) Deputy Minister for Industries and Trade;
  - Statement by Ms. M. A. Martin, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- 11:00      Election of Officers  
  Organization of the Expert Group Meeting (presented by UNIDO)  
  Presentation of the Background Paper by Ms. M. Dikito, UNIDO consultant, and discussion
- 14:30      Country Presentations (15 min. each) discussions : Guinea, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Egypt, Malawi, Namibia, Cote d'Ivoire
- 16:20      Country Presentations continued
- 17:30      End of the day's session
- 18 Januar**            9:00    Country Presentations (continued): Mali, Uganda, Senegal, Cameroon, Nigeria
- 10:50      Country Presentations (Continued)



14:00 Presentations by resource persons  
Mr. Imboden (Chief Technical Adviser, TF/RAF/90/001)  
Ms. Musonda (Zambia)  
Mr. Asiedu (Regional Africa Centre of Technology)

16:20 Discussion on the resource persons' presentations

17:30 End of day session

**19 January** 9:00 Working Group Sessions A and B

Agenda for discussions: information and communication, training, development and use of technology, finance and credit, marketing and safety of products and infrastructure

14:00 Working Group Sessions continued

17:30 End of the day's session

**20 January** 9:00 Presentation of Working Group's recommendations and discussion

Formulation of recommendations

14:00 Adoption of recommendations

17:00 Closing of the meeting

- Report of the Rapporteur (Ms. S. Nasser, Egypt)
- Closing statement by Ms. M.A. Martin, Acting Chief, Integration of Women in Industrial Development Unit
- Statement by Ms. A. S. Makinda, (MP.), Minister for Community Development, Women's Affairs and Children

## ANNEX 3

### LIST OF DOCUMENTS DISTRIBUTED

#### UNIDO documents

**The Role of Women in the Food-Processing Industry in Africa (PPD.258 SPEC), by Ms. M. S. Dikito**

**Appropriate Food Technologies for Women in Central Africa, a Paper Presented at the Symposium and Exhibition for Women on Food Technologies, Maroua, Cameroon, 5-9 July 1993, by Mr. J.J. Kojo Asiedu**

**Integration of Women into the Food-Processing Industry in Africa (PPD.267 SPEC), by Mme. I. Berrouane**

**Women and Technology, a Paper Prepared for OAU Symposium on "Women, Food Self-Sufficiency, and Economic Recovery in Africa", Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 11-15 March 1991**

**Training Programme for Women Entrepreneurs in the Food-Processing Industry (Summary of the Training Programme)**

**Women in Manufacturing: Participation Patterns, Determinants, and Trends, Executive Summary**

**UNIDO Programme for the Integration of Women in Industrial Development 1990-1995 (GC.3/CRP.3)**

#### Country Papers

**Strategie du Gouvernement en Matiere de Promotion de la Femme et de Son Integration dans l'Industrie, Cote d'Ivoire, Mme. A. N. Deza**

**Food Processing and Food Safety, by Ms. Shafika Nasser, Professor of Public Health, Nutrition - Faculty of Medicine, Cairo University**

**Reunion Regionale des Experts sur l'integration de la Femme dans le Domaine de la Transformation Alimentaire, Arusha, Tanzania, du 17 au 20 janvier 1994, by Mme. Assatou bobo Diallo, Conakry, en Guinea**

**Ethiopian Women in the Food-Processing Industry, Paper presented at the African Regional Expert Group Meeting on Women in Food-Processing Industry, Arusha, Tanzania, 17-20 January 1994, by Ms. Yemataworke Haile**

Report on the Integration of Women in Food Processing Industry in Malawi, presented at the African Regional Expert Group Meeting, Arusha, Tanzania, by Ms. Lilian E. V. Kalilani

Exposé à la Reunion Regionale Africaine d'experts sur les Femme dans l'industrie Alimentaire, Tenue à Arusha en Tanzanie du 17 au 20 janvier 1994, présenté par Mme. Mariko Fadima Siby, Bamako, Mali

Namibia's Paper on the Situation of Women in Fish Processing Industries, Ms. H. Shipanga

The Integration of Women in Food Processing Sector into the Mainstream of Nigeria's Industrialization, Nigeria's Country Paper for the African Regional Expert Group Meeting on Women in the Food Processing Industry Arusha, Tanzania, 17-20 January 1994, by Dr. (Ms.) O. A. Aribisala, Director General, Raw Materials Research and Development Council, Lagos

Contribution à la Reunion Regionale Africaine d'Experts sur les Femmes dans l'Industrie Alimentaire: Le Cas du Senegal, par Mme. Aminata Mbengue Ndiaye, Arusha, du 17 au 21 Janvier 1994

The Food Processing Sector in Tanzania: The State of Art and the Role of Women, Paper presented during the African Regional Expert Group Meeting (EGM) Integration of Women in Food Processing Industries, Arusha, 17-20 January 1994, by Mr. W. Lorri

African Regional Expert Group Meeting on Women in the Food Processing Industry, Arusha, Tanzania, 17-20 January 1994, by Ms. Ida M. Wanendeya, Kampala, Uganda

#### Resource Persons' Paper

Environmentally Sound and Energy Saving Technologies, Ms. Namukolo M. Musonda, Gaborone, Botswana

Technologies Ecologiquement Rationnelles et Economies en Energie, Contribution la Plateforme Multifonctionnelle, M. Roman Imboden

Environmentally Sound and Energy Saving Technologies for Sustainable Industrial Development in Africa, with Particular Reference to the Food Processing Sector, J. J. Kojo Asiedu

#### Statement

African Regional Expert Group Meeting on Women in the Food Processing Industry, Arusha, Tanzania, 17-20 January 1994, Statement by Ms. Yetunde Teriba, Women's Affairs Officer, The Organisation of African Unity