



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

2015

SECTOR GENDER DIAGNOSTIC REPORT



User

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL
AFFAIRS

3/31/2015



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INTRODUCTION

Gender equality is a constitutional imperative in South Africa. The Constitution provides for the establishment of one sovereign state, a common South African citizenship and a democratic system of government committed to achieving equality between women and men and people of all races by providing for the **prohibition of racial, gender and all other forms of discrimination**. The achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment is also supported by a framework of policies and mechanisms that include a national gender policy framework and a Ministry for Women in the Presidency.

South Africa is committed to undertake a comprehensive national-level review of the progress made and challenges encountered in implementing the United Nations Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action for the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women, as indicated by the recent country report issued by the Department of Women in the Presidency. It is envisaged that this national-level review will contribute in understanding and engagement of how gender equality and the empowerment of women can be strengthened in a Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The Government of South Africa, including all spheres and tiers, sees the value of affirming gender issues in line with the tenets and ethos of the constitutional democracy that South Africa is. This is shown by the several Sector Gender Framework guiding documents such as:

- Constitution (Act No. 108 of 1996)
- Women's Charter for Effective Equality, 1994
- National Policy Framework for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality, 2000
- Strategic Framework for Gender Equality within the Public Service, 2006
- International Frameworks including UN Women, UNEP, Conservation on Biological Diversity etc.

The Government of South Africa sees the value of affirming gender issues in line with the tenets and ethos of the constitutional democracy that South Africa is. The environment sector priorities are driven by the Environment Sector Plan and the Outcome 10 of environmental assets and natural resources that are valued protected and continually enhanced. Section 24 of the Constitution as implemented through the National Environmental Management Act (NEMA), stipulates that all South Africans have a

right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being and to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations.

In 2013 the Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) undertook to prepare the Environment Sector Gender Framework for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality. This Diagnostic Report seeks to highlight the progress made thus far in the sector to respond to the constitutional mandate and the National Gender Policy imperatives as well as outline key issues for consideration towards the development of the sector gender Strategy that will implement the sector gender imperatives outlined in the Framework document thereby giving effect to the constitutional mandate.

BACKGROUND

The Constitution of South Africa is founded on and articulates the values of human dignity, the achievement of equality, the advancement of human rights (including gender equality) and freedoms, non-racialism and non-sexism. In the Founding Provisions in Chapter 1 of the Constitution it is stated that, “the Republic of South Africa is one sovereign, democratic state founded on the following values:

- (a) Human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human right and freedoms.
- (b) Non-racialism and non-sexism.”

There are also a number of statutory laws that move beyond equality and address issues that mainly affect women - these include the Domestic Violence Act, the Maintenance Act (No. 99 of 1998) with respective regulations, amongst others.

It is within this rich context that the Environment Sector finds a mandate to support the women empowerment and gender equality agenda to ensure that practical measures are taken in implementing the objectives of the Sector Gender Framework so that women may meaningfully participate in society.

The Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) established the National Women and Environment Forum in 2010. This was borne out of an understanding that women remain an integral part of government’s environment programmes and their participation thereof is critical in ensuring inclusiveness in environmental planning and decision-making. Notwithstanding, women are often at the receiving end of abject poverty due to our historical past that entrenched patriarchal attitudes which excluded women from active participation in the broader economy and it is through this forum that women could emerge as primary beneficiaries of opportunities created in the sector.

It has become evident that sustainable development and economic growth are possible only through improving the economic, social, political, legal and cultural status of women. It is from this end that the National Women and Environment Forum became the catalyst and trigger for the DEA to lead the development of the Sector Framework for the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality ('the Sector Gender Framework').

In 2013 the Department of Environmental Affairs developed the Sector Gender Framework outlining the sector's vision, objectives, guiding principles, a focus program of women empowerment and gender initiatives as well as an implementation and monitoring plan all aimed at achieving women's empowerment and gender equality in the workplace. In order to support the objectives of the Sector Gender Framework as well as coordinate and monitor the implementation of its Strategy, DEA established a task team that will ensure the achievement of sector gender equality for the environment sector in accordance with key government legislation and international best practise.

- **Vision for the Sector**

Since the first democratic elections in 1994, the country have sought to place human rights at the heart of the nation's development agenda and enshrined in the Constitution the right to an environment that is conducive to the health and well-being of our people, and one which is protected for the benefit of present and future generations.

The DEA as the custodian for the Environment Sector has a vision for "A prosperous and equitable society living in harmony with our natural resources". The vision is informed by the human rights enshrined in the Constitution, priorities captured in the Millennium Development Goal 2015, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and other government macro socio-economic policies. The vision is translated into goals, priorities and core focus areas which guides how the sector intends to realize its vision, through the implementation of specific programmes and the achievement of certain targets. Given that environmental management in South Africa has been designed with a developmental focus, there is clear alignment and agreement with the developed Sector Gender Framework and the Medium-Term Strategic Framework of the Sector for planning at a strategic level to ensure a holistic and inclusive Strategy.

- **Problem statement**

The Government does, however, face major challenges in ensuring that constitutional, legislative and policy imperatives on gender equality and women's empowerment are translated into substantive

improvements in the lives of women and girls. Key implementation issues that the Government, through the Ministry of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, are currently addressing include:

- Proactively addressing the unintended consequences of progressive legislation, policy and regulation to ensure that progress on gender equality remains on track;
- Strengthening the regulatory frameworks that have been put in place so that they are effectively implemented, enforced, monitored and evaluated;
- Ensuring that sufficient and effective budgeting processes support the implementation of gender equitable processes;
- Aligning constitutional protection of religious and culture practices with the secular rights held by women and girls under the constitution and related legislation;
- Working with a broad range of community and interest groups on to address social, religious and cultural beliefs, assumptions and practices that remain as barriers to women's empowerment and gender equality.

South Africa's definition of and goals towards achieving gender equality are guided by a vision of human rights which incorporates acceptance of equal and inalienable rights of all women and men. This ideal is a fundamental tenet under the Bill of Rights of The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996). It emerged from a long period of struggle for a democratic society that respects and promotes the rights of all its citizens irrespective of race, gender, class, age, disability, etc. (Bill of Rights, Sections 9.1 to 9.4). Another current challenge identified in the compilation of this report is that several laws and policies exist in the country aiming to address issues of women empowerment and gender equality mainly and/or purely from an equity point of view. Whereas the Sector Gender Framework seeks to move beyond the 'transformation' agenda, as the perspective that it is too focussed on numbers, and extend towards comprehensive gender mainstreaming of the environmental sector programmes for inclusive service delivery to all citizens, particularly for women and girl children

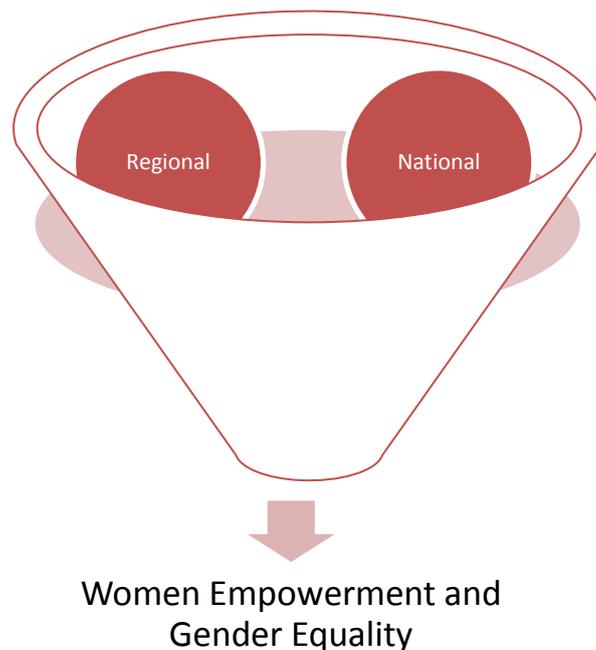
- **Developments to date**

To support the development and subsequent implementation of the framework document the established task team structure would be required to ensure the facilitation and achievement of the objectives of the framework document. A Workshop was held to discuss and finalise the Work Plan towards the development of the Sector Gender Strategy to augment and implement the Sector Gender Framework needs for 2014-2019 (*see annexure A for the Work Plan*). This report is one of the

deliverables towards a status quo assessment of gender issues in the sector and highlights the need for the Strategy.

LITERATURE REPORT

The following discussion will outline the reflection of Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Nationally, Regionally and Internationally.



Nationally

- **Strategic Framework document for Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Sector**

Through the Literature Review conducted nationally from the Strategic Framework document for Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Sector it is clear that there is a need to ensure the participation of women in decision making so that the needs of women can move from margins to the centre of development planning and resource allocation. Policy analysis is also required to examine the effects of gender differences when implementing policies. It is important that both men and woman be equally involved in decision making processes. The South African Policy for Women Empowerment and Gender Equality is implemented nationally and provincially on the status of women. Public participation and developing education through democracy, and skills development are key in order to achieve the sector's objectives.

The Legislative Sector in South Africa has identified the strengths in terms of gender which reflect Legislative mandates that are in place, and are support mechanism that ensure the promotion of

gender within the Public Sector which are Legislative bodies. The constitution and the bill of rights also promotes gender equality, and the gender policy framework broad strategies and programmes that support gender equality, the women and men of parliament that have institutional knowledge, competence and commitment to gender mainstreaming.

The Draft Strategic Framework on Gender and Women's Economic Empowerment is aimed at promoting broader participation, equity, redress in order to broaden the base of empowering people. The Framework also provides support in ensuring women participation in the economy and its objectives are focused on challenging the direct and indirect barriers in enterprise, industry and trade which prevents women from equal access and control of economic control.

There is a need to strengthen women's capacity and network to benefit from policies and programmes within the economic sector, and increase the access of finance to women. As well as to conduct research and put in place monitoring systems to measure gender impact. A similar approach was also followed to that of the Legislative Sector document reflecting that there was a need to improve gender mainstreaming within the country and the policies thereof.

- Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill

This bill has been developed by the Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities. The following are the objectives of the bill:

- To give effect to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, in particular—
 - (i) the equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms by every person;
 - (ii) the promotion of equality, specifically gender equality; and
 - (iii) the values of non-racialism and non-sexism contained in section 1 of the Constitution;
- To give effect to the letter and spirit of the Constitution, in particular— (b) facilitate compliance by designated public bodies and designated private bodies, with the country's commitments to international agreements, including—
 - (i) the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (December 1979);
 - (ii) the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (September 1995);
 - (iii) the Millennium Declaration and Development Goals (September 2000);
 - (iv) the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (July 2004); and
 - (v) the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (August 2008);

- To align all aspects of the laws and the implementation of the laws relating to women empowerment and the appointment and representation of women in decision-making positions and structures;
- To facilitate the development and implementation of plans and strategies by designated public bodies and designated private bodies for the promotion of women empowerment and gender equality, and the submission of those plans and strategies to the Minister for consideration, evaluation and guidance;
- To provide for the implementation of measures to achieve a progressive realisation of a minimum of 50 per cent representation and meaningful participation of women in decision-making structures including Boards by designated public bodies and designated private bodies, as contemplated in section 7;
- To provide for the implementation of gender mainstreaming by designated public bodies and designated private bodies as contemplated in section 8; and
- To provide for the development and implementation of public education programmes on practices that unfairly discriminate on grounds of gender as contemplated in the applicable legislation and in international agreements in order to promote gender equality and social cohesion.

The Act indicates that the Minister may use any dispute resolution mechanisms to address non-compliance with this Act. An accounting officer is guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine or to imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years, if that accounting officer fails to comply with the provisions of this Act. To commits an offence and is liable to a fine not exceeding 10% of the total annual turnover of the designated private body or specific sector sanctions or imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years.

- **National Development Plan Vision 2030**

According to the National Development Plan, economic transformation is about broadening opportunities for all South Africans, but particularly for the historically disadvantaged. It is also about equity in life chances and encompasses an ethos of inclusiveness that is presently missing. Such opportunities and inclusiveness should also benefit women.

The National Environmental Management Act (Act no. 107 of 1998) (NEMA) makes it clear that the vital role of women and youth in environment management and development must be recognised and their full participation therein must be promoted. As recognised in the MDG report of 2013, achieving environmentally sustainable economic and human development remains a challenge for most

countries, including South Africa, where in spite of macroeconomic development poverty, inequality and unemployment persist.

The challenges faced are not only in poverty, inequality and unemployment. Over the last five decades, South Africa observed climate trends such as in extreme rainfall events that show a tendency towards increasing in frequency annually, and especially in spring and summer. The maximum and minimum daily temperatures have been increasing annually, and in almost all seasons. Such climate conditions have impacts on human beings, livelihoods and natural resources. Our integrated adaptation and mitigation responses should therefore not only assist with managing the risks but also ensure radical participation of women and equal opportunities.

In 2005 and 2006 Environmental Affairs hosted Women and the Environment conferences that laid a firm basis for a national women and environment agenda for the sector. The national Women and Environment Forum, established in 2010, continues to provide a platform for women representing Government spheres, private sector and organised business, civil society (rural and urban), organised labour, NGOs, academia and research institution to share experiences and involvement in environmental and sustainable development programmes, share best practices, exchange knowledge, skills and expertise, and explore networking, capacity building and other communications mechanisms of support.

The Chief Directorate Environmental Sector Coordination facilitates the gender mainstreaming, women empowerment, gender equality and transformation including the support activities of the national women and environment forum. The work of the Chief Directorate is complemented by the Directorate of Transformation, Employee Health and Wellness designed to mainstream and monitor projects that benefit women at a corporate level.

Regionally

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development illustrates the integration and mainstreaming of gender issues into the Southern African Development Community Programme of Action and community building initiatives key to sustainable development. The objective of the Protocol is to provide for empowerment of women to eliminate discrimination and to achieve gender equality and equity through the development and implementation of gender responsive legislation, policies, programmes and projects.

There would be a need to implement the harmonisation of various instruments which members of State have subscribed to at Regional and Continental and International level. Address emerging gender

issues and concerns, to set realistic, measurable targets, time frames and indicators for achieving gender equality and equity. To strengthen, monitor and evaluate the progress made by member of state and the goal indicated within the Protocol document and to strengthen regional integration, attain sustainable development, and strengthen community building.

The SADC Protocol documents promotes equal participation by both male and females in all electoral processes, decision making through putting in place policies, strategies and programmes through leadership, gender sensitivity training and mentoring. Providing structures for decision making positions, strengthening structures to enhance gender mainstreaming as well as changing discriminatory attitude and norms of decision making structures and procedures.

In terms of Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation the State Parties would need to ensure the implementation of the Protocol document at a National Level and there are national action plans with measurable timeframes and evaluation mechanisms developed and implemented. The State parties should collect and analyse baseline data against progress in which through achieving targets it will monitored. Reporting will be done every two years to the secretary of SADC.

The SADC also developed the Protocol on Environmental Management for Sustainable Development aimed at enhancing the protection of the environment in order to contribute to human health, well-being and poverty alleviation. There would be a need to promote equitable and sustainable utilisation of natural and cultural resources and the protection of the environment for the benefit of the present and future generations. There is a need to promote shared management of trans-boundary environment and natural resources as well as effective management and response to climate change and variables.

In order to achieve the said objectives there would also be a need to contribute towards sustainable development through the adoption of sound environmental management principles and procedures. Ensuring equitable access and sharing of benefits that accrues from genetic resources. Ensuring that gender equality and equity is mainstreamed into environmental management for sustainable development. The mainstreaming of sustainable development objectives into trade and socio economic policies, programmes and plans in the region.

Enhance restoration, rehabilitation and remediation of degraded polluted environments. Facilitate the harmonisation of environmental policies, legislation, law enforcement and natural resources governance. Monitor and report on environmental trends and the implementation of trans-boundary programmes in the region including development and implementation of early warning systems and environment risk assessments. Facilitate the development, implementation and coordination of environmental assessment procedures, environmental management instruments and standards.

Develop and implement coordinated climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and implementation of coordinated environmental disaster management responses.

There would be a need to manage the collection of storage movement, disposal of waste and hazardous chemicals and radioactive materials. The prevention and control of air, water and soil pollution and degradation of regional natural resources. Promote sustainable land management practices to prevent soil erosion, land degradation, deforestation, desertification, overgrazing and bush encroachment and promoting the use of environmental economics and natural resources accounting in development planning.

Internationally

- **United Nations Environment Programme**

Mainstreaming Gender in UNEP entails change in attitude and practices and how work is carried out. The vision of UNEP is to develop a gender responsive environment and management programme. UNEP developed the Gender plan of action in 2006 which would focus on ensuring that gender is fully integrated into the work UNEP does internally and at an external level. There would be a need to build capacity of partners is integrating gender into environmental programmes from global to local levels.

The UN fact sheet also highlights that in the development of the gender mainstreaming strategy through the implementation of the Action Plan the first step would be to analysis should be made of the current contributions and responsibilities of both men and women and the potential impacts of planned processes and activities. Mainstreaming does not replace women focused projects and programmes and legislations. Mainstreaming and empowerment for women are complementary strategies. Mainstreaming should be implemented in a way that it facilitates the empowerment of women.

- **Beijing document¹**

The environment is a key factor in developing a sustainable economy and ensuring that all socio-economic elements of this field of study and work accommodate the inclusivity of women. This is done through actively involving women in environmental decision making at all levels; integrating gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development as well as through strengthening or establishing mechanisms at national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies that are specific to woman.

The South African Constitution stipulates that everyone has the right: (a) To an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being; and (b) To have the environment protected, for the benefit of

¹ Extracted from the Commission on Gender Equality Beijing+20 Report, 2015

present and future generations, through reasonable legislative and other measures that: (i) prevent pollution and ecological degradation; (ii) Promote conservation; and (iii) Secure ecologically sustainable development and use of natural resources while promoting justifiable economic and social development. This affirms South Africa's position on the importance using its natural resources in a sustainable manner.

The work of Government is guided by the constitutional imperatives in the execution of their mandate which also promises that all South Africans have a right to an environment that is not harmful to their health or well-being, and to have the environment protected, for the benefit of present and future generations. Thus Government's work on the environment includes:

- Protecting and conserving oceans and coastal environment
- Waste management
- Creation of green jobs while contributing to the creation of decent work and livelihood opportunities.
- Developing communications to heighten environmental awareness.
- Ensure that government, industry and the public are informed, supported and regulated to act responsibly to conservation generally including conservation of the ocean and coastal environment,
- Ensure that South Africa honors local and global obligations.
- Promote, coordinate and manage an effective national mitigation and adaptation response to climate change

The priority areas of focus include:

- providing support to local government in the areas of air quality management, waste management, biodiversity management, coastal planning and open space planning;
- drawing linkages between climate change, the green economy and sustainable development;
- paying particular attention to ensuring that environmental assets and natural resources are valued, protected and continually enhanced (Outcome 10).

The most impoverished communities in South Africa are most vulnerable to issues surrounding their environment, for example climate changes caused by un-sustainable means of resources management. Women in particular from the rural areas are considered to be most vulnerable to harsh impacts of climate change because of their high levels of poverty and underdevelopment, as a result their capacity to adapt to, and recover from, climate change related impacts is limited to a very large extent. In many cases women in these areas are still directly dependent on ecosystem services as the basis for their survival and livelihoods.

Addressing these issues requires vigorous interventions such as those envisaged by initiatives undertaken by the Conference of Parties (COP), the resolutions undertaken within these structures can be used to drive this transformation by raising local, national and international awareness of climate change issues, to create and encourage political support for climate protection, and to catalyse the conversion to the green economy. To this end, the country has set up a multi departmental team to ensure that the country implements resolutions with identified timeframes.

For instance: “a number of important climate change related interventions were instigated as a direct consequence of hosting the 2010 FIFA World Cup in Durban; these included reforestation projects with mitigation, adaptation and social upliftment co-benefits, as well as urban greening initiatives and awareness raising. Hosting the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change COP 17/CMP 7 negotiations has extended these efforts, providing the opportunity to increase awareness of climate change and the climate protection work that is being done by eThekweni Municipality. It has also catalysed the development of novel approaches such as the CEBA concept.’

Programmes of Government:

- Environmental Quality and Protection: Protect and improve the quality and safety of the environment to give effect to the right of all South Africans to an environment that is not harmful to health and wellbeing.
- Oceans and Coasts: Ensure that government, industry and the public are informed, supported and regulated to act responsibly to conserve the ocean and coastal environment as well as to honour South Africa’s local and global obligations.
- Climate Change: Promote, coordinate and manage an effective national mitigation and adaptation response to climate change
- Biodiversity and Conservation: Promote the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources to contribute to economic growth and poverty alleviation.
- Environmental Sector Programmes and Projects: Implement environmental sector projects and assist in job creation In dealing with political challenges they reaffirming Rio principles and past action plans by reaffirm their commitment to advance progress in implementation of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the Barbados Programme of Action and the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation.

Other programmes that empower women include:

- i. Working for Water-The programme is globally recognised as one of the most outstanding environmental conservation initiatives on the continent. It enjoys sustained political support for its job creation efforts and the fight against poverty. WfW considers the development of people as an essential element of environmental conservation. Short-term contract jobs created through the clearing activities are undertaken, with the emphasis on endeavouring to recruit women (the target is 60%), youth (20%) and disabled (5%). Creating an enabling environment for skills training, it is investing in the development of communities wherever it works. Implementing HIV and Aids projects and other socio- development initiatives are important objectives. Since its inception in 1995, the programme has cleared more than one million hectares of invasive alien plants providing jobs and training to approximately 20 000 people from among the most marginalized sectors of society per annum. Of these, 52% are women.
- ii. Working for Land (WfL) project- Working for Land in partnership with Land care Programme, communal farmers and community leaders to prevent and continuously control natural resources so as to mitigate bush encroachment/thickening and loss of top soil. This would create employment opportunities and socio-economic benefits for the local residents and thus making the necessary contribution to the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP). The Special Public Works Programme includes the targets of 60% women, 20% youth and 2% disability.
- iii. Working for Wetlands- The programme is implemented by the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) on behalf of the departments of Environmental Affairs (DEA); Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF) and Water Affairs (DWA). It forms part of the government's Expanded Public Works Programme, which seeks to draw unemployed people into the productive sector of the economy.
- iv. Working on Fire- Working on Fire (WoF) was launched in September 2003 as part of the South African Government's initiative to create jobs and to alleviate poverty. Today WoF employs more than 5000 young men and women who have been fully trained as veld and forest fire fighters and are stationed in more than 200 teams throughout South Africa. WoF addresses the prevention and control of wild land fires to enhance the sustainability and protection of life, poverty and the environment through the implementation of Integrated Fire Management (IFM) practices 85% of whom are youth, 37% are women (the highest level in any comparable fire service in the world).

There are other programmes that involve women and the environment to name some like; Rhino Dialogues South Africa, Green Cars, Green Fund, Climate Action Now, as well as donor funded projects. The socio-economic development of any country leans strongly on the need to conserve its

natural resources and to this regard South Africa has been working towards bolstering this sector and ensuring our natural resources are seen as a scarce and therefore valuable resource for development.

20 YEAR JOURNEY

The past twenty years (1994-2014) have seen a dramatic and sustained process of formation of environmental guiding principles, institution building and restructuring, legislation and policy development, and domestic and international engagement – all with the intention of addressing the historical legacy of inequality, international isolation and the fragmented structures of environmental governance.

Employment equity by June of 2014 indicate that 57 percent of DEA employees are women: led by female executives including the Minister, Deputy Minister and Director-General. Women occupy several CEO positions in sectoral entities such as Cape Nature, South African National Biodiversity Institute and South African Weather Services.

Access to professions and skilled jobs - in line with the Skills Development Act of 1998, the Department of Environmental Affairs has administered the Environmental Sustainability Learnership Programme. To date nearly 300 female learners have benefited: going on to formal employment in business, Government and non-Governmental and community based organisations. (Standard of living (Source: StatsSA, 2013)

Education - access to schooling: Since 2011, 74 bursary opportunities were created for women in the Department of Environmental Affairs; in addition to an external bursary scheme where 189 bursary opportunities benefited women students. These initiatives have gone a long way towards addressing the skills gap in the environment sector and reducing unemployment, especially of young women

Women in selected Government flagship interventions

- *Women as beneficiaries of the Jobs fund* - The environment sector implements the R500 million Groen Sebenza three years project that offered unemployed graduates and school-leavers the opportunity to work in 43 participating private sector, government, NGO and academia organisations. The project supports 472 women of the total 800.
- *Women as beneficiaries of the Green fund* - The 2010 national green economy summit commitments included that green jobs opportunities are to cater for women in implementing low-hanging and long term programmes. Our National Green Fund established in April 2012 has injected much needed funding into women-headed green economy projects like the Muthi Futhi project in Edakeni, near Eshowe, Uthungulu District in KwaZulu Natal province. Here a group of

rural women are pioneering the commercial production of selected indigenous traditional medicinal plants, with the sale of herbal products ensuring a fully functional and operational enterprise that provides green jobs. A similar such initiative is the 100 percent women owned Bema Bamboo project in Mandeni, Ilembe District in KwaZulu Natal. This project aims to produce top-quality Beema Bamboo biomass feedstock.

- *Women work force on the Expanded Public Works Programme* - The environment sector is supporting a host of other projects around the country that promote environmental conservation and sustainable use, but at the same time impart skills to women in areas such as wetland conservation and rehabilitation. These include those within the ambit of the Expanded Public Works Programme such as Working for Wetlands, Working for Water, Working for Fire, Working for Waste and the Land Care Programme. In 2013/14 alone, 80 658 (53%) work opportunities were created for women under the environment and culture sector programme. This was an increase from the 2012/13 73 678 work opportunities created for women.

The South African green economy modelling report also revealed that investments in the natural resource management, in particular working for water has potential to create jobs while increasing water supply and making biomass available for power generation. Employment in the natural resource management sector occurs both in the restoration of the water ecosystem services and in the utilization of the biomass for energy. Most of the employment, however, arises from the alien species elimination. Although it started in 1995, the working for water programme remains highly relevant in the green economy interventions thus opportunity for increased women participation.

DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES

Following the road map on a regional and continental level, South Africa has ratified the Southern African Development community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development (SDGD), the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Women and Children, The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

Therefore, as stated in the gender policy framework, there are key processes and mechanisms that “affirm a vibrant national gender programme advancing the country towards gender equality.” However, it is also clear from this report that so much more still needs to be done. Hence this sectoral approach by the Environment Sector to influence and contribute the gender debate and agenda.

The Strategy will thus have to respond to pertinent issues arising from the literature review and the 20 year journey in the sector:

- *Mandate* – the Sector needs to strengthen its mandate, position and approach to women empowerment in the mist of all the legislative framework;
- *Institutional arrangements* – from the literature it appears that the ‘gender’ role is assigned to Human Resources and/or Transformation with the focus on equity and organisational development issues;
- *Advocacy* – in the recent years gender issues have been highly politicised and to an extent racialized, again the focus has been on equity targets which excludes the unemployed women. Accountability of practitioners for advocacy has weakened;
- *Role of civil society* – the Constitution reflects on gender as a human right the role of civil society needs to be revived but requires resources to empower citizens to meaningfully participates;
- *Gender mainstreaming* – analysis and consistent monitoring and evaluation of programmes, the technical approach using gender framework tools have to be explored.
- *Leadership and Control* – issues of access and participation particularly for the vulnerable groups such as women needs to be explored.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is proposed that the following recommendation from the various sources be noted as they will serve beneficial for the development of the Environment Sector Gender Strategy.

- The Gender Mainstreaming Strategy be implemented through the Action Plan.
- The Review of the appropriate literature for gender mainstreaming be conducted through gender policy framework and international instruments.
- A baseline of Indicators to be established which will include the definition of minimum standards and ideal standards for the sector’s performance.
- A common understanding of the gender key components in order to achieve gender mainstreaming.
- Conduct a budget and resource analysis
- Feasible monitoring tools and process to track the progress determined with key stakeholders and application to the Strategic Plan.
- Continuous reporting in order to identify gaps and area which require further intervention.

- The implementation Strategy should include both the political and administration elements in it, as the work performed at a political level will be a reflection of the administration processes implemented.
- Conduct stakeholder engagement provincially and conduct analysis of gender related issues at the grass root areas.
- Task team members to utilise the recommendation stated within the document for the development of the Sector Gender Strategy.

CONCLUSION

While Government continues to take the lead in providing the rights-based legislative framework for achieving gender equality, there is an ongoing need to ensure that there is a critical mass within the broader South African society that supports and practices gender equality. These challenges require a continuing dialogue between the public, private and civil society sectors, in partnership with international agencies on awareness raising, advocacy, and education in support of the socio-economic and political rights and entitlements of women and girls.

Based on available data indeed South Africa could be considered to have reached most gender equity targets, if not exceeded them. South Africa's performance has also improved for several of the indicators over the period. While the country performs well on the international indicators, South Africa does face a range of socio-economic and cultural challenges that continue to underpin aspects of gender inequality.

The following factors play an important role in the complex dynamics of assessing progress towards achieving gender equality:

- **The need to encourage a more equitable and non-gender division of labour**

Women's share of non-agricultural wage employment remains below half, but realistically one would not expect it to reach half given the gendered division of labour in the home that is internationally pervasive. Nevertheless, limited participation of men in unpaid care work as well as limited provision of child care services for young children could be serving as obstacles to increasing the share.

- **The need to develop measurements that better capture the complex dynamics of gender in South Africa**

The variable availability and quality of data suggests that the standard indicators are not adequate for capturing the complex nature of gender equality challenges in South Africa.

- **The need to ensure equitable access to employment opportunities for women**

The fact that women continue to have a higher rate of unemployment than men and tend to earn less than men is, from a gender perspective, undesirable. This is even more undesirable given that, on average, women's attainment in respect of education is higher than that of men. These are some of the issues that South Africa needs to focus on if gender equality and equity is to be achieved.

- **The need to address gender based violence on all fronts**

Within the education, health and justice sectors more needs to be done to address the pervasively high levels of violence, including gender-based violence.

- **The need to ensure that women and men have equal access to improved educational and employment opportunities**

Looking beyond gender differences, there is clearly also still a long way to go in addressing the high levels of unemployment, and poor quality of education and poor performance of both male and female learners. Further, differences persist at geographical level and between population groups.

Women's social, economic and political participation in national and local decision-making is an important step towards women empowerment. It is crucial that the needs and interests of women and girl children are given policy and implementation priority, both at the national political level and within the context of the community and the home. Education is essential in order for women and girls to know and claim their rights. It is of particular importance for women in terms of access to formal employment, and the consequent improvements in quality of life and standard of living. Indicators that provide information about women and girls in education, employment and the political sphere are essential tools for policy makers and planners in ensuring that progress made towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women is sustained.

ANNEXURE A: SECTOR GENDER STRATEGY WORK PLAN

SECTOR GENDER STRATEGY WORKPLAN PERIOD: 01 OCTOBER 2014 – 31 MARCH 2016

ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES	TIMEFRAME	RESPONSIBILITY
1. Literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database of appropriate literature on existing gender programmes/structures/interventions 	01 October 2014 - 31 March 2015	Task Team
2. Status quo assessment at international, regional, national and provincial levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status quo and needs analysis report • Updated framework document 	01 October 2014 - 31 March 2015	Task Team
3. Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder engagement report and database <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ X2 National Workshops (x1 with practitioners; x1 with decision makers) ○ Best Practice field visits mainly in provinces ○ Environment Sector Focus Groups Meetings (NGOs, academia, government i.e. Working Groups and Mintech) 	01 April 2015- September 2015	Task Team supported by the Service Provide.
4. Development of the strategy and implementation plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft sector gender framework strategy document • Presentations to Working Groups and Mintech. 	01 October 2015 - December 2015	Service Provider
5. Communication material development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework document (glossy, user friendly publication) • Policy Makers Brief • Messaging, brochures, pamphlets and posters for the public 	01 October 2015 – December 2015	Service Provider
6. Consolidate all findings and compile a status quo report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommendations to Environment Sector for implementation • Project close-out report 	01 January 2016 – 31 March 2016	Service Provider

The development of the Sector Gender Strategy initiative comprises of the following teams:

- WG 3- Steering Committee for the development of the strategy and the Coordination structure feeding to Mintech and Minmec
- Directorate Intergovernmental Planning and Coordination- Project Coordinators