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CONFERENCE ON INTEGRATED EVALUATION AND PLANNING
FOR STRENGTHENING GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR POVERTY
REDUCTION IN RWANDA

Title :

**GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND WOMEN'S
EMPOWERMENT AS STRATEGIES FOR GOOD
GOVERNANCE AND POVERTY REDUCTION**

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1 INTRODUCTION

In this paper special attention will be put on highlighting gender equality and women's empowerment as development strategies as well as their pertinence in strengthening the process of good governance and poverty reduction. It is also important to review the achievements so far made with regard to the above development priorities the constraints yet to be addressed and the way forward.

1.1 . Background

Rwanda is a country that is emerging from one of the most traumatic experiences in modern history. The 1994 genocide affected the country's social fabric as well as its economic and political systems. It is against this background that the government attaches great importance to the design of policies and programs aimed at transforming and rebuilding the country into prosperous, sustainable and equitable nation. The government is equally committed to the goal of ensuring that all citizens, men and women, will be able to fully contribute and benefit from the national development process.

1.1.1 Country context

Rwanda has over the years experienced bad governance characterized by discrimination based on ethnicity, region, religion, gender. Besides these features of bad governance others include, inadequate participation of the majority of the population, inadequate capacity (human, systems, structure, networks, attitudes, institutions) at both central and local government levels, passivity, lack of initiative, dependency syndrome on the part of the majority of the population caused by over-centralization, exclusion from participation, insignificant presence of women and youth in the running of the political, economic and administrative system in the affairs of Rwanda, among others.

The Rwandan society is characterized by a patrilineal social structure which is at the root of gender-based discrimination with the resultant gender imbalances which constitute development constraints.

The phenomenon of deep rooted and wide spread poverty is directly linked to bad governance and gender imbalance. Promoting good governance and poverty reduction are central development priorities the government of Rwanda has adopted. Gender equality and women's empowerment are sine qua non conditions for achieving the goals of good governance and poverty reduction for sustainable and equitable development.

It is important to take stock of what has been achieved in the last six years by different development actors, the challenges yet to be overcome and propose appropriate interventions for the way forward.

1.2 Objectives

This paper aims at defining Gender approaches and its importance to achieving equitable and sustainable development

- To show the linkages between promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment with good governance and poverty reduction.
- To propose the setting up of an effective system of monitoring and evaluation of good governance programmes and poverty reduction activities from a gender perspective.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The problem of gender imbalances in Rwanda is one of the major obstacles to sustainable development and it affects the equal enjoyment of human rights of both men and women. Gender being a cross-cutting issue, it affects all aspects of life at different levels. The gender critical issues as highlighted by the 1996 socio-demographic survey are reflected by data below;

- 54.3% of the Rwandan population are women
- 60% of the population in the productive age bracket are women.
- 34% of households are headed by women compared to about 20% of Africa average.
- 56% of all Rwandese are illiterate of whom 52% are females and 48% males.
- Labor force engaged in the primary sector in 91%, 38.8% are males compared to 52.3% females. In the secondary sector overall total is 1.7%, 1.5% are males and 0.2% are females. In the tertiary sector labor force is 6.5%, 4.1% are male and 2.4% are female.
- 70% of Rwandese live below poverty line of whom 70% are women.
- In secondary schools, girls make 40% in total enrolment while at university girls form 25%.
- In health sector, maternal rate rose from 810 in 1997 to 1300 in 1999.
- Proportion of HIV/AIDS between the age bracket of 25-29 years is 21.5% females and 13.9% males.
- In decision making, Ministers and State Ministers: 9.5% are women and 90.5% district Mayors-2.6% are women and 97.4% are men; Prefets 0% are women and 100% are men.
- In Diplomatic service-96.6% are men are 6.4% are women.
- About 58% of those who cannot read or write are women, and 70% of the poorest of the poor are women.

The figures presented above portray a situation of gender imbalance in all sectors and this has got a lot of implications on the country's development.

The statistics on gender imbalances presented above are strongly supported by women's voices recoded in poverty reduction policies relevance test survey findings undertaken by OSSREA team in different parts of the country.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section aims at giving a better understanding of the concept of gender, good governance and to highlight the linkages between them.

2.1 Definition of Concepts

Gender: refers to the social roles and characteristics allocated respectively to women and men, girls and boys in particular societies and at particular time. Therefore, gender is a dynamic issue whereas sex is static. Gender differences must be recognized and taken care of in planning development interventions. Gender is an important variable that must guide development orientation. Despite Rwanda's patrilineal social structure and dynamics in modern history, women's roles have not evolved in consonance with changing economic, political, social and cultural realities. This underlies the gender imbalances in our society.

Gender Equality: Gender equality refers to equality under the law, equality of opportunity, including of rewards for work and access to human, financial and productive resources that enable opportunity and equality of voice to influence and contribute to the development process. Gender equality also refers to situation where women, men girls and boys have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and have equal opportunities for realizing their potential

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to be able to contribute equally and effectively to national political, economic, social and cultural development and benefit equally and from the results. Gender equality is not synonymous with sameness between men and women. Gender equality implies an on going process in which the underlying causes of discrimination are systematically identified and removed in order to give women and men equal opportunities. The strategic approach to do so is gender mainstreaming. It refers to the fair and just distribution of all means of livelihood and opportunities between men and women.

Gender mainstreaming refers to:

- The process of assessing the implications of women and men of any planned action, including legislation, budgets, policies and programmes in all areas and at all levels.
- A gender equitable distribution of resources, opportunities and benefits of the mainstreaming development process, which entails integration of gender equality concerns.
- Inclusion of the interests needs experiences and vision of women and men in the definition of development approaches, policies and programmes and in determining the overall development agenda.

Women's empowerment: refers to an approach that focuses on women specific programs such as meeting women's basic needs as well as promoting women participation in non-tradition domains. The main thrust of women in development (WID) approach is women's empowerment.

Women's empowerment is usually used as a strategy for gender mainstreaming.

Good Governance: is an equal participation of all citizens, men, women, boys and girls. Good governance is about efficient, transparent and accountability in managing institutions for the well being of the population and development of the country.

Therefore promoting gender equality and women empowerment is a sine qua non condition for good governance and poverty reduction.

That is why the Government of Rwanda at the highest levels has declared gender equality as essential to the achievement of its national development goals and in particular good governance and poverty reduction.

2.2 Linkages Between Gender, Good Governance and Poverty Reduction

Development policies and programmes adopted by government decisions affect men and women differently. Yet due to their different constraints options incentive and needs, women and men experience poverty differently and they have different priorities for poverty reduction programmes. Consequently in order to significantly improve both the equity and efficiency of good governance system and poverty reduction strategic policy, gender differences must be recognized and taken into consideration in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development interventions.

Recent gender research compellingly correlates greater gender equality with greater poverty reduction and economic growth. The latest World Bank annual flagship policy research report, engendering development, present extensive evidence to demonstrate these linkages.

Through analyzing micro, country, and across country gender- differentiated data reviewing empirical work from several social science discipline, engendering development concludes that although women's status has improved in most countries in the a half century, gender disparities persist everywhere and remain most acute in poorest countries.

Across and within countries, gender disparities in education, mortality rates, health and other indicators are greatest within poorer income groups. Gender inequalities impose large costs

on the well-being and health of the poor, diminishing productivity and the potential to reduce poverty and ensure economic growth. In most societies women have more limited opportunities to improve economic conditions to access service than do men.

The government of Rwanda has embarked on decentralization program as the central pillar of good governance. Decentralization involves the transfer of resources from the center to the local level of administration. The overall objective is to empower people. For this strategy to achieve its objectives it is imperative to adopt the gender approach which will ensure that men and women participate fully equally and benefit equally from the development process.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS

In the last 7 years, the government of Rwanda through the Ministry responsible for Gender-Equality and Women Empowerment and other institutions has realized tangible achievements in the context of women empowerment and gender equality as a pre-requisite for promoting good governance, poverty reduction among others.

- The ministry of Gender and women in development has been created with a clear mandate of facilitating the elimination of gender imbalances in all sectors through a process of gender mainstreaming and at the same time promoting women advancement through adopting deliberate actions in economic and social-political empowerment. This is an important milestone.
- Various affirmative actions have been undertaken in different sectors aimed at reducing women's and girl's historical and social disadvantages.
As a strategy to empower women economically, women communal funds and other women support initiatives were set up to improve women access to micro-credit and managerial skills. To date a total amount of 445.500.000Frw has been disbursed to 122 communal funds out of the target of 174 communal funds. Capacity building for management committees of women communal in the area of credit management, project planning is an on going process, including:
 - The creation of National Women Councils with a structure from grass root to national level. Women elected leaders of their choice at every level. The organizing and holding democratic elections throughout the country by women councils was both an important milestone and good practice that was later emulated by Ministry in charge of local government and territorial administration.
 - The setting up and operationalization of women councils from grassroots to national level has increased women's visibility and participation in public affairs and increased their political space thus making it possible for women to be represented in elected local councils and parliament.
 - The ministry of local government through the decentralization policy has formalized the affirmative action in decision-making organs such as the local administrative decision-making councils.
 - Promotion and support of women managed enterprises through training, study tours and facilitating their participation in international fairs.
 - Training in management of small and medium enterprises
 - Developing of partnerships with Ministries, local NGOs to influence projects aimed at poverty reduction. These include: African Development Bank (ADB), International Finance for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
 - A law on succession; matrimonial regimes and succession has been enacted by the

parliament and officially gazetted. This will improve family security by ensuring equal access to resources by men and women, boys and girls. Other discriminatory laws are being revised to make them gender-specific particularly in the process of reviewing the national constitution. In collaboration with the World Bank, the Ministry of Gender has developed a plan of action on gender and law.

- The government of Rwanda has ratified the convention on all forms of discrimination against women (CEDAW) and is in the process of implementing the Beijing Platform for Action. A permanent mechanism has been established with the responsibility of monitoring and coordinating actors within the government, civil society and international organizations involved in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. This is an important step in the direction of promoting human rights and good governance.
- Creating an enabling environment for the smooth functioning of the civil society and partnership with the government.
- Sensitizing women leaders throughout the country about their civic rights, history of Rwanda, good governance, democracy and poverty reduction.
- In an effort to empower women and communities at grass root level as early as 1997, the Ministry decentralized resources (money, vehicles, and personnel) at the communal level.
- Carrying out a gender sensitization campaign across the country which has created awareness among leaders, policy-makers and the community.
- Through a participatory process a national gender policy has been designed and a 5-year gender action plan adopted. The Ministry of Gender has also participated in engendering the population policy, poverty reduction strategy, Health policy, Education and Land policy.
- Organizing capacity building programs for Parliamentarians, policy makers and NGOs.
- Studies on the gender profile have been conducted by the government and women in the civil society. These include: Prostitution, Women and Decision-Making, Women and Gacaca, Feminization of Poverty, Girl-Child Education, Women and Land Issues, Socio-Cultural Survey, the functioning and Management of Women Communal Funds, Women in Media etc.

4 CONSTRAINTS

- The number of women in decision-making positions is still very low, and those few women in those posts still lack leadership and managerial skills to influence policies and programs developed at national level.
- Lack of focus during the emergency period emphasis tend to be on practical needs such as shelter, food and other basic needs other than planning for long term strategic needs.
- The National gender machinery responsible for promoting gender equality has undergone frequent restructuring and change of mandates, experienced staff logistical and financial resource constraints.
- Chronic poverty, wide spread ignorance and a culture of dependency.
- Patrilineal social structure and the gender stereotypes that perpetuate the mentality of resistance to gender equality and women empowerment at all levels.
- Limited government budgets and diminishing donor support in the critical phase of development.
- Gender equality is not yet taken as priority issue, which has an effect on resource allocation and involvement of a gender ministry in national development processes.
- Lack of statistical data disaggregated by sex necessary for effective Planning from a gender perspective.
- Lack of the necessary technical capacity to carry out gender analysis and planning,

monitoring and evaluation.

- Lack of a coherent system of coordinating national programmes
- Women's limited access and control to and over resources (capital, Management skills Markets, Information and Communication Technology etc).
- Majority of the people living with HIV/AIDS are women and girls due to their vulnerability to violence, poverty and status of women in the Rwandan tradition.
- High rate of illiteracy among women

5 STRATEGIC ACTIONS

5.1 Strategic actions on Good Governance

- To develop mechanisms and train women to participate in electoral process, political activities and other leadership areas.
- To create an enabling environment to facilitate women balance their reproductive and official roles (laws and facilities).
- To promote programs that will enable women and men to reconcile their work and family responsibilities and to encourage men to share equally with women household and child-care responsibilities.
- To incorporate gender issues in civic education.
- To mobilize both women and men to support and promote women candidates for political and decision-making positions at all levels.
- To appoint at least 30 % women in local and central government organs including cabinet, supreme court and parliament.
- To encourage women to take active part in national and local government politics.
- To provide information, assertiveness, public speaking and leadership training to enable women participate in the political process.
- To establish career counseling and guidance services in leadership at primary, secondary and tertiary levels for women, men, boys and girls.
- To train Ministry of Local Government and Social Affairs (MINALOC) officials at central and decentralized level in gender analysis and planning skills.
- To undertake actions aimed at engendering the new national constitutions and other necessary legal reform processes.
- To strengthen women councils and youth councils.
- To strengthen communication system between governance institutions with the aim of building partnerships and strategic alliances.
- To undertake measures to bring about changes of mentality (gender stereotype) targeting decision-makers, women and men, girls and boys.

5.2 Strategic Actions on Poverty

- To train women and men in business and management skills.
- To encourage and lobby for establishment of credit schemes for poor women.
- To encourage women and men to participate in credit and saving skills
- To open special windows for women including young women, women with disabilities, and the elderly who lack access to traditional resources of collateral.
- To facilitate women to establish medium and large-scale businesses.
- To review and engender credit delivery procedures of micro finance institutions.
- To simplify banking practices by reducing the minimum lending deposit and other requirements for banking procedures.
- To instill the culture of saving and investment into women and the community.
- To encourage women to take up leadership roles in savings and credit societies.
- To undertake legal reform to enable women accessing and control over land

- To systematically engender the PRSP and develop gender sensitive mechanism of monitoring and evaluation.

6. DELIVERY SYSTEM

- Set up a multi-sectoral mechanism for monitoring good governance at national level, and ensure that cross-cutting issues such as gender are taken into account.
- Establish an effective mechanism of monitoring and evaluation (set up a system of indicators of gender equality, good governance and poverty reduction).
- Set up and strengthen gender focal mechanism in poverty reduction and governance institutions.

7 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Giving the critical linkages between good governance, gender equity, equality and poverty reduction analyzed above, important actions should be undertaken to strengthen the process of good governance, and poverty reduction through enhanced and systematic gender mainstreaming by all development actors.

It is in this regard that we make the following recommendations:

- Initiate affirmative actions in different institutions as a strategy to promote women.
- Systematic gender mainstreaming at all levels of policy, plan, legal formulation; program design, implementation; monitoring and evaluation.
- Collection, analysis and dissemination of data disaggregated by sex in all sectors and institutions.
- Promotion of sub-regional, regional and international networking initiatives in good governance, poverty reduction, peace building, control of HIV/AIDS pandemic, regional economic integration, ICT and gender mainstreaming.
- Creating synergy between different but complementary national programs and improved system of coordination.
- Institutions and development actors to undertake resource mobilization and engender their budgets.
- Define clearly the role of different institutions and their working relationship within the framework of decentralization at central and decentralized levels.

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ADDENDUM 1

SUMMARY OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS

<u>Objectives</u>	<u>Constraints</u>	<u>Recommendations</u>	<u>Responsible Stakeholders</u>
To increase women's effective representation in decision-making organs at different levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low representation of women in politics and decision-making positions plus lack of leadership and managerial skills to influence policies and programs developed at different levels. 	To develop mechanism and train women to participate in electoral process, political activities and leadership	MIGEPROGE MINALOC Women Council Pro-femme-Twese Hamwe
To increase women's access to and control over resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women's limited access to and control over resources. 	To undertake legal reform to enable women access to and control over property and other economic assets	MINIJUST, Constitutional and Legal Commission, Parliament, MIGEPROFE, women Councils and Women organizations
To create a data bank that is disaggregated by sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of adequate statistical data disaggregated by sex necessary for effective planning from a gender perspective 	To develop a data bank that is sufficiently gender responsive	MINICOFIN Provincial Statistical Departments All Public Institutions including Ministries Institutions of higher Education.
To greatly reduce the phenomenon of feminization of poverty	Poverty burden weighs more heavily on women than men. This is structural phenomenon of poverty.	To facilitate women to establish medium and large scale projects. To provide special credit services for rural women who lack collateral security. To engender the PRSP and develop gender sensitive mechanism of monitoring and evaluation	MIGEPROFE and other sector ministries, CDCs, Civil society and private sector
To reduce the incidence of illiteracy of women	Relatively higher rate of illiteracy among women as a critical hindrance to women participation in development process.	- To provide the necessary infrastructure for functional literacy programs. - Promote the girl child education	MINEDUC, MINALOC MIGEPROFE, Women organizations, Youth and women councils

To develop norms and values that foster a gender sensitive society	Social cultural norms and values that perpetuate resistances to gender equality and equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -To sensitize different sections of the population on gender and related concept -To undertake advocacy activities to promote gender equality 	MIGEPROFE, MINALOC, MINEDUC, MUESPOC, women councils and Women organizations
To increase expertise on gender planning and analysis	Lack of technical capacity to integrate a gender in planning, designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of development interventions.	To provide gender analysis and planning skills to gender focal points in different Ministries with special focus on MINALOC and decentralized organs.	MIGEPROFE, MINALOC
To increase the capacity of women's organizations and structures	Limited capacity of women's organizations and structures at different levels	To provide management, leadership skills through training	MIGEPORFE, MINALOC Women organizations
To ensure availability of financial resources to support women's initiatives	Limited financial resources to support women's empowerment initiatives	<p>Mobilization of financial resources at national and decentralized levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To encourage and lobby for establishment of credit schemes for poor women. - To open special windows for women including young women, women with disabilities and elderly who lack access to traditional resources to collateral. 	MIGEPROFE, MINALOC District committees and women council secretariat at national and provincial levels

To put in place an effective monitoring and evaluation system of Micro-credit schemes for women	Poor functioning and management of women credit schemes.	To recruit and hire credit monitoring officer at least one in each district	Province District MIGEPROFE MINALOC
To provide women with the necessary infrastructure for their effective functioning and capacity developing	Lack of necessary infrastructure to reinforce proper functioning of women councils and credit revolving funds Lack equipment for elected women representatives offices.	To build and equip women centers at least one in every province. To provide basic office equipments [Co;puters, telephone for elected women committees at Province and District levels.	MINALOC DISTRICTS MIGEPROFE PROVINCE

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