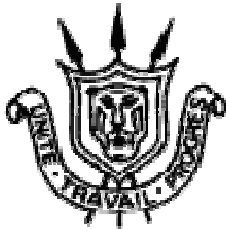


REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY



GENDER AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS IN BURUNDI

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ACCRONYMS

ABUBEF	:	Association Burundaise Pour le Bien-Être Familial
CIDA	:	Canadian International Development Agency
ACORD	:	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
AFAB	:	Association des Femmes Entrepreneurs du Burundi
ANSS	:	Association Nationale de Soutien au Séropositifs et Sidéens
APFB	:	Association pour la Promotion de la Fille Burundaise
AS BL	:	Association Sans But Lucratif
BINUB	:	Bureau Intégré des Nations Unies au Burundi
CAFOB	:	Collectif des Associations et Organisations Féminines du Burundi
CEDAW	:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women
CEFORMI	:	Centre de Formation et de recherche en Médecine et Maladies Infectieuses
CNLS	:	Conseil National de Lutte contre le Sida
COMESA	:	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CSLP	:	Cadre Stratégique de Lutte Contre la Pauvreté
EAC	:	East African Community
FAWE	:	Forum of African Women Educationalists
FBU	:	Franc burundais
IMF	:	International Monetary Fund
GCDF	:	Gender and Community Development Framework
ISTEBU	:	Institut de Statistiques et d'Etudes Economiques du Burundi
OMD	:	Objectifs du Millénaire pour le Développement

ONG	:	Organisations non gouvernementales
ONUB	:	Opération des Nations Unies au Burundi
WFP	:	World Food Program
PNLS	:	Programme National de Lutte contre le Sida
PNSR	:	Programme National de Santé de la Reproduction
PREFED	:	Programme Régional de Formation et d'Echange pour le Développement
SADAC	:	Southern Africa Development Community
SFI	:	Société Financière Internationale
SWAA Burundi:		Society for Women against AIDS in Africa
UNFPA	:	United Nations Fund for the Populations
UNIFEM	:	United Nations Fund for Women
UNICEF	:	United Nations Fund for Children
TB	:	Tuberculosis.

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. International Context

Since its independence, Burundi has always joined the international community to address issues facing the world within the framework of international instruments it ratified together with other UN member countries. Thus, Burundi has never ceased to testify its commitment by complying with basic human rights such as provided in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenants on Human Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979), the Copenhagen Declaration (1995) stressing community development through poverty reduction, job creation and social inclusion, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981).

In its constant quest for sustainable solutions to issues facing humanity, Burundi recently joined the rest of the international community to proclaim its commitment to gender promotion as outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals (2000), the New Partnership for African Development, the sub-regional treaties at SADC and COMESA levels, just to name a few. All those instruments underscore the cross-cutting nature of the gender issue and serve as important tools for signatory countries to integrate gender in their policies, programs and projects at all levels and in both public and private sectors. Burundi has rightly understood it that way because not only did it proclaim its support to the initiatives aimed at eradicating gender-based inequalities through its participation to the processes that led to the ratification of above-mentioned instruments, but also it has translated it into action in the national context as outlined in the following section.

1.2. National Context

Burundi has adopted at the national level different strategies aimed at eradicating existing inequalities between men and women. It has first of all put in place instruments that serve as a solid political base to analyze the gender issue in the country. Therefore, the national Constitution voted in March 2005 acknowledges the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as an integral part. The non-compliance with that Convention means the violation of the National Constitution. Under its article 22, the Constitution provides that all citizens are equal before the law which guarantees equal protection. No one may be subject to discrimination based on their origin, race, ethnicity, gender, color, language, social status, religious, philosophical or political beliefs, or physical or mental handicap, or suffering from HIV or any other incurable disease.

The Arusha Agreement for peace and reconciliation provides a minimum 30% of women representation in decision-making organs.

Vision 2025 that Burundi adopted as well as the strategic plan for its implementation termed Strategic Framework to Fight Poverty [Cadre Stratégique de Lutte contre la Pauvreté (CSLP)] consider gender to be one of cross-cutting issues. Indeed, the women's central role in the socio-economic development is recognized as one of the eight basic principles for growth and poverty reduction within the CSLP. The gender issue is therefore a key element that must be considered in formulating objectives and activities related to the CSLP strategic pillars.

The National Gender Policy and its action plan are other very important national tools that underscore the importance of gender mainstreaming in all national policies and programs, whether public and private.

The National Gender Policy outlines objectives, strategies and actions to be undertaken in areas identified as a priority for the country's sustainable development. The national gender policy aims at correcting inequalities in those priority areas, namely culture and tradition, security and mobilization for peace, poverty, employment, agriculture, health, education and training, equal rights, violence against women, decision-making, information and communication.

Beside the national instruments and tools, the Government of Burundi has put in place mechanisms to facilitate the translation of such tools and instruments into action. Therefore, at the central level, the Ministry of social Action and Women Promotion coordinates activities aimed at gender mainstreaming in the above-mentioned areas and undertakes advocacy with different development partners.

Other mechanisms are provided for to monitor the national gender policy. Those are notably the establishment of a National Gender Council, a Technical Committee of the National gender council and a Permanent Executive Secretariat of the National Gender Council. The **National Gender Council** is a consultative body that brings together all stakeholders in the promotion of gender equality for a better coordination of actions that will be undertaken in all areas.

Burundi adopted an action plan for implementing the Beijing Program based on six areas which actually include six others (to make a total of 12 key areas identified in Beijing), namely, mobilization for peace, health, HIV/AIDS, fight against poverty, education and training, equal rights, and information and communication.

1.3 Rationale

The gender situational analysis in the Burundian context is not just a matter of accident. It is actually being carried out in the right time when the country is mending its social, cultural, political and economic fabric after more than ten years of crisis. Burundi

adopted regional integration as one of its strategies for achieving peace and sustainable development. It has therefore joined the countries in the sub-region to form the East African Community currently made of 5 member countries after Burundi's and Rwanda's membership. The 5 countries are Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. The East African Community Treaty acknowledges gender, which is defined as being «the role of women and men in society», as one of its basic principles at the same level as good governance, social justice, rule of law, accountability, equal opportunities, protection and promotion of human and peoples' rights. In its Chapter 22 under Articles 121 and 122, the Treaty acknowledges the important role played by women in socio-economic development and in business. The Treaty therefore provides that gender mainstreaming in all areas and aspects of member countries is significantly important for the community's sustainable development. Thus, gender and community development were taken into account during the drafting of the gender and community development framework for the East African Community. However, that instrument was drafted before the membership of Burundi and its Northern neighbor, Rwanda. The need for gender situation in both countries is therefore felt so that those countries' data may be incorporated into the document. This justifies the purpose of gender analysis in Burundi.

1.4 Problem statement

Although it has been already stated in the previous paragraphs, it is always necessary to stress the need for a gender analysis and the problem it seeks to solve in Burundi. The gender analysis is very important because it raises three key issues. Firstly, gender is a human rights issue in the sense that it is a social justice issue. Solving the issue of inequalities and equity between men and women is administering justice for both sexes. Secondly, it is a development issue. That derives from the general principle according to which there cannot be sustainable development if needs, interests, concerns and experiences of men and women are not taken into account in any development process. Thirdly, gender is a poverty issue: Women are generally the majority of poor people because of the position their gender assigns to them. Given that women represent 52% of

the Burundian population, it would not be realistic to plan for national development without giving all due attention to the needs and interests of Burundian women.

Moreover, in Burundi just as in many other countries, women represent the highest rate of illiterate people and, thus, the education level remains the lowest in comparison to the one of men. Despite the fact that praiseworthy efforts have been made to achieve the millennium development goals in the education sector, especially in the primary and secondary education, the women representation in higher education leaves a lot to desire. Consequences of such a situation are notably unplanned births, a very high child and maternal mortality rate, malnutrition that covers an important section of the population, difficulty to eradicate sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS and others. Solving the gender issue is therefore equal to providing a solution to the above-mentioned issues and their consequences. If gender is not taken into account in all the national development process that would imply a major weakness that would affect for sure the country's Vision 2025.

CHAPTER II: METHODOLOGY

The methodology that was used for this study mainly covers two elements, namely data collection and analysis.

2.1 Data Collection

Data were collected through consultations in the form of interviews with key actors in the gender area as well as gender specialists available in the country. Interviews were focused on the following aspects: achievements, challenges, weaknesses and future prospects for better gender mainstreaming in the country's policies, programs and projects in both public and private sectors and at all levels.

Beside consultations with key stakeholders, we also conducted a documentation review: policies and programs available involving the populations' massive participation in gender issues. The review also targeted the above-mentioned elements. It was also focused on studies on gender issues carried out by the Government of Burundi or different development partners including UN Agencies, national and international NGOs and all other organizations interested in gender issues in the country. Special attention was attached to the very content of policies and programs, achievements resulting from the implementation of those policies and programs, difficulties encountered in their implementation, their weaknesses, and recommendations made by the different stakeholders.

In addition to qualitative data, the review also included collection of statistical data available in the different studies produced by some public institutions as well as the different national and international organizations.

The documentation review also focused on research on gender that was carried out within the East African Community.

Apart from data collected through interviews conducted by national specialists, other data were collected in different studies undertaken by some Ministries and other public institutions, UN Agencies, local and international NGOs operating in the country.

2.2 Data Analysis

Qualitatively collected data were processed and analyzed based on emerging themes. The thematic analysis is therefore the technique that was used in qualitative data analysis. Quantitative data were used to confirm or discharge some realities on existing inequalities between men and women, and associated to themes that emerged from data processing. Themes that correspond to those developed in the Gender and Community Development Framework for the East African Community were given priority for the sake of uniformity.

CHAPTER III: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

For the sake of uniformity, the exercise on gender analysis in Burundi followed the same model such as presented in the Gender and Community Development Framework for the East African Community. After a brief overview on the country profile and the good practices for each country, the model presents exploration of the following elements: the legal framework, institutional mechanisms, capacity building for individuals and communities, issues of gender mainstreaming in priority areas, research and documentation, gender and peace process. It goes without saying that, in this study, good practices will come after exploration of achievements and constraints encountered by the country during the gender mainstreaming process for the implementation of different policies, programs and projects put in place.

3.1. Country Profile

According to the projections made on basis of data of the General Census of Population and Habitat of 1990, Burundi would have 7.7 million people in 2005 with a density of 296 inhab./km² during the same year¹. Available data show that for 2005, the inflation rate increased significantly compared to 2004 from 8.4% to 13%. However, since mid-2005, the value of the national currency (FBU) increased by 1.2% compared to currencies of Burundi's major trade partners. That situation together with the monetary tightening contributed to the significant reduction of the inflation rate (1%) by end December 2005. The gap between the official exchange rate and the parallel market rate was also stabilized². Indeed, Burundi's economy has recorded an economic growth of 3.6% since 2004, and it was stabilized at the same rate up to 2007³. In 2008, it will achieve a growth of 6% according to the IMF⁴.

3.2 Legal Frameworks and Institutional Mechanisms

3.2.1 Legal Frameworks

Burundi has put in place legal frameworks for gender promotion and the most important ones are indicated in the first chapter. It should first be noted that the national Constitution acknowledges equality between men and women and considers CEDAW to be its integral part. The Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation is another legal instrument that supports gender promotion, especially in terms of decision-making.

It provides a minimum 30% of women representation in decision-making levels, even though that principle is limited to the National Assembly (Chamber of Deputies and

¹ Economie burundaise 2005. Ministère du Développement et de la Reconstruction Nationale. Département de la Planification Centrale. Service de la Planification Macroéconomique. P1

² Op cit, p3

³ Burundi, les Chiffres Clés de l'économie, 2008, P.12

⁴ Op cit p12

Senate) as well as to the Cabinet. It is therefore worth noting that the other structures and institutions are not concerned with that principle. The national gender policy is another very important tool aiming at promoting gender especially in terms of its integration into the country's policies and programs. Every Ministry is supposed to implement the national gender policy in its areas of intervention. An action plan for the implementation of the national gender policy is in place.

Despite the existence of above-mentioned legal frameworks, the lack of understanding of gender for policy makers remains a problem. Moreover, the implementation of the action plan for implementing the Beijing Platform for Action is hindered by problems that prevent it from becoming an efficient tool for the promotion of gender equality, notably due to the little sensitiveness of leaders in the relevant sectors, the lack of means for operation of the Committee of Beijing Follow-up, as well as the political context that does not make it a priority⁵.

Following the above-mentioned shortcomings, the implementation of the national gender policy remains hindered given that the different actors who should normally facilitate and encourage its implementation still remain in a situation that does not allow them to be aware that the use of that instrument is a must for gender mainstreaming into all activities pertaining to national development. Once they have fully understood the usefulness of that instrument, that fact will make it possible for harmonization of procedures of gender mainstreaming into the different priority sectors of the country. It will therefore be easy to draft gender-sensitive policies and their strategic plans at the level of partner institutions as necessary tools for gender mainstreaming into the institutions themselves to begin with and into their programs and projects afterwards.

Institutional gender policies may serve as windows of opportunity for putting in place frameworks that will allow to deal with issues for instance around violence of all kinds, early/forced marriage, human (especially women and children) trafficking, divorce,

⁵ Rapport national d'évaluation décennale de mise en application du programme d'action de Beijing. Ministère de l' Action Sociale et de la Promotion de la Femme, 2004. P8.

succession problems, etc.

3.2.2 Institutional Mechanisms

In order to implement its constant commitment in gender promotion, Burundi put in place mechanisms to facilitate the translation of legal frameworks into actions. Thus, it put in place the Ministry for National Solidarity, Repatriation, National Reconstruction, Human Rights and Gender, in order to ensure coordination of activities aimed at promoting gender at the national level, and to undertake advocacy with the different development partners.

Other mechanisms are provided in the Constitution, namely, the National Gender Council, the Technical Committee of the National Gender Council and the Executive Permanent Secretariat of the National Gender Council. While acknowledging the importance of those mechanisms, adequate action should be taken to make them more functional and efficient once they are implemented. The need for increasing the budget, which remains limited at around 1% of the national budget for the entire Ministry in charge of gender, is so strong⁶.

The establishment of Gender Focal Points is an efficient mechanism for gender mainstreaming into organizations, but their efficiency would be much more felt and visible if their skills in the matter were strengthened.

Moreover, given their role, among others, to influence decisions, Gender Focal Points should be people with positions of influence, not just support positions as it is often noted in different organizations in both the public and private sectors as well as in the Civil Society⁷.

⁶ Rapport national d'évaluation décennale de mise en application du programme d'action de Beijing. Ministère de l'Action Sociale et de la Promotion de la Femme, 2004. P9

⁷ Opcit P

3.3 Capacity Building for Individuals, Households, and Communities

Burundi made an effort to build the capacity of its population through different means. Regarding gender, the Ministry in charge of Gender tries to coordinate all gender-related activities between development partners and implementers. Capacity building is undertaken by way of mobilization/ awareness raising and training, especially in the following areas: job creation for vulnerable groups, including women, children heads of households, handicapped people, people living with HIV/AIDS, and other vulnerable groups; the development of appropriate technologies to lighten women's tasks and facilitate job creation; functional literacy training; governance improvement by encouraging people-centered policies, respect of human rights, and participation, and by discouraging corruption and similar practices.

The Government of Burundi has always been concerned with access to employment as a development indicator. That may be noted in the interim strategic framework for economic recovery and poverty reduction, where women are an integral part of the national concern. Indeed, the strategic component number six is entitled ; «**Promotion of women participation in development**», and it aims at (i) developing women's access to education and participation in decision-making, (ii) promoting maternal and child health, (iii) promoting women's access to production factors. The Government of Burundi was also committed under that third objective to:

- Implementing and drafting laws that promote equal treatment, particularly for access to land and collateral for accessing financial resources;
- Raising awareness of society on gender equality in order to improve women's status in the family;
- Supporting job creation initiatives through strengthening of the associative movement;
- Lightening women's tasks by spreading appropriate technologies.

Generally, existing laws guarantee the same rights for men and women regarding access to employment and related benefits, except for maternity leave, and efforts have been made.

Article 57 of the Constitution of the Republic of Burundi provides that «With equal competence, every person has the right to, without any discrimination, equal pay for equal work». Despite that there is no legal obstacle that prevents women's access to employment the situation is such that 'they are still the minority at the level of high paying jobs. That situation is the consequence of limited access to secondary, technical and higher education. Gender-related disparities in the education sector are deep and therefore they have repercussions at the employment level.

It should also be recognized that encouragement of higher education by the Government of Burundi has had a positive impact on women's participation to higher education. Sustained support in that area will certainly contribute to reducing gender-related disparities in Burundi's higher education.

The Government of Burundi did not only encouraged initiatives that aim at building capacity for formal education, but it also did the informal education. That is why the Rural micro-credit fund and TWITEZIMBERE project funded by the Government of Burundi and supported by the World Bank, whose purpose is to fight poverty, grant loans to rural women's associations that deal with production and marketing of food, livestock and handcraft products. Other micro-credit financial institutions like CECM and the rural micro-credit fund encourage women to save and give them loans at low rates; 67.3% of loans granted by CECM are given to women.

A women entrepreneurs' association of Burundi (AFAB) was born and has the following objectives: to develop women entrepreneurship, to collect and to disseminate information, to train women in enterprise development and management, to promote regional and international partnership as well as exchanges, to provide legal, administrative and technical assistance to members, and to improve the business legal

framework. Women traders have started going abroad for importing trade goods. But according to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, they are only estimated to be 16%, and they are only carrying out transactions from time to time⁸. At that level, there is an urgent need for capacity building. That may be achieved, for instance, through establishment of macro-economic policies and development strategies which respond to women's needs and efforts, entrepreneurship training, and awareness-raising for women to save and apply for loans so as to reduce imbalance in the household.

The UNDP and some NGOs have initiated micro-credit for income generating activities, small flock, trade, and restocking. Other UN Agencies and organizations such as the UNFPA, UNIFEM, UNICEF and others, have provided support and continue to do so in the area of capacity building.

Their support is focused on training, research, reproductive health and population, good governance, human rights, gender-based violence, and many other aspects.

ACORD as an organization intervening in the area social justice puts gender equality among its top priorities. A wide awareness-raising for actors on that value as well as capacity building on gender mainstreaming into programs and organizations were carried out by ACORD during these seven last years. The fight of violence against women and girls during conflicts is one of the advocacy themes about gender in Africa for ACORD. Since June 2005, ACORD has been implementing in Burundi a support project for economic and social reintegration of young girls affected by the war and victims of violence. That project is funded by DCI-Canada and is implemented in 5 communes of Bujumbura (Buterere, Cibitoke, Kamenge, Musaga and Kanyosha) and 4 communes of Kayanza (Kayanza, Muruta, Rango and Muhanga). That project is conducted in partnership with 4 other civil society organizations;

- The Association of Women Lawyers for the legal component
- ABUBEF for the psycho-social component
- APFB for the advocacy component

⁸ Rapport national d'évaluation décennale de mise en application du programme d'action de Beijing. P15

- The Association of Girl Guides of Burundi for girls' leadership strengthening
- ACORD for the economic component and project coordination⁹.

Girls identified as the neediest underwent a professional training in different professions of their choice; tailoring, automotive mechanics, hairdressing, broidery and catering. In total, 221 girls underwent that professional training, and 66 have already been funded, while others have already submitted their project proposals. Twenty seven (27) members of APFB and two (2) of ACORD followed a training of trainers in project designing and management, and have already provided that training to 166 young girls. In addition to the economic component, the girls underwent different trainings on several topics directly related to their life: gender and citizenship, reproductive health and HIV/AIDS control, life skills and some legal concepts. Similarly, trauma healing sessions were regularly organized for them once in a term. They also benefited from counseling sessions and individualized psychological follow-up for serious trauma cases, and home-based visits.

National NGOs and associations did not lag behind in contributing to capacity building. For instance, CAFOB, which is an umbrella of women local associations intervene in several areas such as peace, health and HIV/AIDS, poverty reduction, women entrepreneurship, justice, women's and children's rights advocacy, widows and orphans' protection, training and advocacy. The different member organizations of CAFOB provide beneficiaries with skills and techniques that help them improve their welfare.

Such activities should be encouraged, and the Government is making an effort in that sense, but that effort is limited by financial constraints. The Government has indeed made efforts in tax revenue collection, but the needs for reconstruction and increase in economic activities are many after so many years of war. Tangible changes have been made by financial institutions; before granting a loan to one of the spouses, there is always a need for the other spouse's endorsement. However, a very important element is yet to be materialized; that is, the succession law. The matter is still under discussion by relevant authorities; there is a hope that satisfactory responses will result from

⁹ Rapport : Composante Genre et exclusion sociale. ACORD, P2

discussions among the different stakeholders. It goes without saying that the sustainability of skills and techniques acquired during the capacity building process is needed. Some beneficiaries are still confused when the project that supported them comes to an end. They therefore need assistance and guidance for the sustainability and upgrading of skills they had acquired.

3.4 Gender and Community Development Mainstreaming into Macro-economic and Sector Policies and Programs

Burundi put in place national instruments to serve as basic tools for gender mainstreaming at the macro-economic and sector level as well as at the program level. The country's Constitution, the Strategic Framework to Fight Poverty, the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation and the National Gender Policy are among others national instruments that acknowledge gender as a crosscutting issue that touches on different sectors at different levels. This analysis is about the 8 priority areas as identified by EAC/GCDF.

3.4.1 Agriculture

The Government of Burundi has made efforts for economic recovery, and agriculture remains among the most important areas given that the majority of the Burundian labor force (84%) work in the agricultural sector¹⁰, women being the majority of that force. Formation of associations is sustained as a strategy that allows efficiency of interventions and women associations are encouraged. Thus, the TWITEZIMBERE project funded by the World Bank and whose objective is the fight against poverty grants loans to rural women's production associations introduced by provincial departments of agriculture and livestock. Although efforts made by Government to boost national economy are visible, rural women, who play a major role in the Burundian reproductive economy, do not always have control over capital facilities and they are faced with several constraints that

¹⁰ Burundi, les chiffres clés de l'économie, 2008

weaken them. The crisis worsened, as 21% of households are headed by women and 60% of war casualties are women. Yet, women's courage should be noted since they continue fighting for their families' survival. For learned women, their index of participation to the economic, political and social life is not beyond 3%¹¹. Insufficiency of agro-pastoral inputs, the use of archaic and unproductive methods as well as insufficient cultivable land, the low use of appropriate technologies to lighten tasks of the rural population and of women especially, the heavy burden of customs and mentality that hinders women from claiming their land rights and limits their freedom to access credit is one of the major obstacles to be overcome to make the Burundian agriculture an important area for sustainable development. That situation would easily add to factors that justify the urgency of the issue of succession rights, matrimonial regimes and donations.

3.4.2 Health

The crisis of more than a decade that happened in Burundi had a very negative impact on the population's health. According to the database of 2003 DHD indicators, there was one doctor for 38,461 people, one hospital for 200,000 people and one health centre for 12,820 people. The vaccination coverage was 66.7%, the maternal mortality was 8 for 1000 births, life expectancy dropped to 46 years¹². Women show a very high maternal mortality rate because of lack of time and means to ensure adequate medical monitoring of pregnancies and delivery. To mitigate that situation, the Government of Burundi encourages training and supervision of traditional birth attendants through the National Reproductive Health Program and the team of basic equipment. That made it possible for reducing the maternal mortality rate and increasing the delivery rate in an assisted environment from 17.6% in 2002 to 22.45% in 2004¹³. The Government of Burundi also initiated other measures to facilitate access to quality services for its population. Thus, for instance, a health insurance card is provided and makes it possible for free consultation and tax-free medicines, free and urgent care for epidemics, free treatment for TB and leprosy.

¹¹ Rapport national d'évaluation décennale de mise en application du programme d'action de Beijing P14

¹² Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes : rapport périodique de mise en application, 2005. P32

¹³ Opcit P32

The Government of Burundi has identified five priority areas covered by the National Reproductive Health Program, namely;

- 1 Lower risk maternity with 4 components:
 - Pregnancy monitoring;
 - Awareness raising for delivery assisted by qualified personnel;
 - Breastfeeding;
 - Awareness raising for antenatal and postnatal care;
- 2 Family planning;
- 3 Fight against sexual violence and through training, provision of equipment for medical care of victims, use of media;
- 4 Reproductive health during emergencies;
- 5 HIV/AIDS control; the PNRS works hand in hand with the National AIDS Control Program (PNLS).

All those components contribute to the improvement of the family health quality, and that gives the family and woman in particular the needed strength to contribute to family and national development. Other actions are added and are carried out by the CNLS as well as other organizations in charge of HIV/AIDS control.

For instance, the National AIDS Control Program (PNLS) initiated a series of activities and funded studies for gender mainstreaming into all projects and programs funded by the PNLS.

The outcome of those studies showed that nearly 60% of people living with HIV/AIDS are women. The 2002 seroprevalence study carried out by CEFORMI indicated that prevalence rate was 13% among women and 5.5% among men in urban areas, 13.7% and 6.8% in semi-urban areas, and 2.9% and 2.1% in rural areas. NGOs and non-profit making associations, such as SWAA Burundi, are widely campaigning to fight AIDS, distribute antiretrovirals and provide home-based assistance and counseling to the sick, among which women are the majority. There is currently a wide mobilization of people

living with HIV/AIDS to be organized in associations, at places of work, residence or through other outreach activities.

Although praiseworthy efforts have been made by Government and development partners, there still is a long way to go to reach goals set up in the health sector policy. If indeed significant progress has been made in reducing the maternal mortality rate, thanks, among other things, to training and provision of basic materials for traditional birth attendants, the contraceptive prevalence rate remains lower than 5%, which is still very low given that the mentioned policy plans the reduction of 50% of child mortality and increase of the contraceptive coverage rate by 2%¹⁴. That is somehow related to obstacles and problems encountered, among which:

- The heavy burden of customs and mentality that push especially the rural population to consulting witchdoctors and traditional medicine;
- The insufficiency of access to infrastructure, services and care, especially for the most vulnerable groups, among which women are the majority;
- The security situation that increased disparities in health coverage, following deaths, displacement or emigration of some healthcare personnel;
- Direct and indirect costs for services while the majority of families are very poor: the health budget represented at least 3% in 2001;
- The dependence upon and conditionality of foreign aid (56% of budget) that hinder the achievement of some national programs.

3.4.3 Culture and traditions

Just as in many other countries, the Burundian woman status depends on the society's patriarchal organization, which confines the young girl in domestic sphere while the young boy is encouraged to occupy in the public sphere. The transformation of such a society into a gender-sensitive one is a whole process. Nevertheless, progress has been made by the Government of Burundi since the review of initial report on CEDAW.

¹⁴ Rapport national de l'évaluation décennale du programme d'action de Beijing, 2004. P14

The traditional conflict resolution institution, «*Ubushingantaha*», which used to exclude women, has started changing by open doors for women. A study has been conducted by FAWE to identify cultural values that would contribute to gender promotion. It also raised some negative values that would hinder a gender-sensitive development. Those positive values are already a starting point that would facilitate quick change of gender-insensitive behaviors and practices once they are disseminated.

Although an important step has been achieved by the Government of Burundi towards a gender-sensitive culture, obstacles are still persistent. The latter can be observed in some cultural practices that make the Burundian woman pigeon-holed in social life. That can also be found in some legal instruments, such as the **law on nationality** that does not allow the woman married to a foreigner to give her nationality to her child or husband; **successions, matrimonial regimes and donations** are still ruled by the customs which discriminate against women; **the labor code** which should be revised to be in harmony with the CEDAW; **the taxation law** which taxes the married woman as a person without any dependent, and **the penal code** in adultery-related matters.

3.4.4 Trade and Services

In Burundi, trade is still dominated by men, but women have already shown their will to contribute to that vital area of the national economy. The Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Burundi [Association des Femmes Entrepreneurs du Burundi (AFAB)] has assigned itself the mission of «promoting women's entrepreneurship in Burundi». The Government of Burundi encourages women's associations so that members women could benefit credits from microfinance institutions, such as, CECM and the Rural Micro-credit Fund, encourage women to save and they give them loans at low rates. For instance, the following table shows results achieved by CECM (67.3% of loans are given to women), during the period between 2000 and 2003;

Table 1: Results achieved by CECM

Year	TOTAL OF CREDITS GRANTED	PROPORTION OF CREDITS GRANTED TO WOMEN	%
2000	279,248,287	194,760,562	69.7%
2001	376,761,086	256,197,538	67.9%
2002	617,634,112	444,528,320	71.9%
2003	915,309,723	540,716,806	59.0%

The table indicates considerable efforts made by CECM to encourage women to invest in related trade and services. The Government of Burundi supports such an approach and is already working with women's associations which receive micro-credits through TWITEZIMBERE, a project funded by the World Bank.

However, obstacles hinder women's progress in trade. The absence of a macro-economic policy and development strategies responding to the needs and efforts of women and the lack of training in entrepreneurship and the lack of awareness of the need for savings and credit strengthen imbalances not only at the household level but also at the national level.

3.4.5 Education

The Burundian official educational system has recorded a significant quantitative development during the 1980s to date. However, the crisis that the country went through has particularly undermined the education sector causing the destruction of infrastructure, the lack of qualified teachers and blockage of funding. That situation has had negative effects at all education levels. In primary education, for instance, for year 2001/2002, 541,000 children in school age did not attend school, that is, a net rate of 50.9% (for a gross rate of 73.2%). That situation improved with progressive peace building. Thus, in 2003-2004, the net rate was 59.1% and the gross rate was 81%.

In secondary education, the generalization of primary education has led to the very significant increase of candidate numbers in secondary education. As secondary education did not follow that pace, there is a problem of access for primary school children to secondary school. The Government of Burundi encourages the creation of Communal Colleges (Junior Schools), which ultimately create the same scenario at the level of senior high schools.

In higher education, the Government has established the scholarship loan system, but is faced with insufficient funds, which is a problem to satisfy all the applications for admission to higher education.

Despite the fact that efforts to solve education problems in general have been remarkable, the issue of women/girls under-representation is a sensitive one as one moves from one level to another. Girls/women are much less represented at the level of higher education.

Statistical data collected for the 4 academic years stretching over the period 2000-2004 are clearer about girls' under-representation; 42.2% of girls in total in general secondary education and 33.8% of girls in technical schools. Those disparities are huge in A2, A3 and A4 level Technical schools, where girls' representation varies between 24.2% and 37.3%. Disparities become even more significant at the level of higher education. They are more strongly marked at the University of Burundi than in private universities. Indeed, out of the five academics stretching over the period 1999-2004, females respectively represent 26.0%; 27.8%; 29.2%; 30.5% and 27.7%¹⁵. Statistical data do not show the profile of women's participation in science and technology, but the assumption is that gender-related disparities would also be much more marked at females' disadvantage.

The Government of Burundi has taken measures to reduce disparities between men and women and that has born some fruits ; free primary education, construction of Communal

¹⁵ Convention sur l'élimination de toutes les formes de discrimination à l'égard des femmes : Rapport périodique de mise en application, 2005 P24-25

Colleges (Junior Schools), encouragement for construction of private universities, and many others have contributed to the increase of the number of females at all levels. Yet, there are still some challenges that need to be addressed to eradicate gender-related disparities in education. Those include but not limited to:

- Socio-cultural obstacles related to the heavy burden of customs and mentality due to illiterate parents who think that female education is a loss of household's manpower for production in the fields and resistance from one part of the population to accept the relevance of female education;
- Dependence on conditionality of foreign aid that hinder the achievement of some national programs;
- Direct and indirect costs of services while the majority of families are very poor;
- The insufficiency of school infrastructure and services dictates parents to give special consideration to boys than girls;
- The security situation that prevents some parents from letting their still young daughters to go to school for fear for their life or possible rapes that they may suffer from possible belligerents;
- The lack of role models for girls from some areas causes the low school demand for females in some rural areas;
- Gender stereotypes are still present in the school environment and make it less secure for girls;
- Early pregnancies that compel single mothers to prematurely interrupt their studies;

- The timetable that is overloaded for women and does not leave them time for school and literacy activities.

3.4.6 Water and Sanitation

Naturally, Burundi is a hydrographically rich country. There are a lot of lakes, rivers and streams all over the country. That means that access to water is not a problem as such for any resident on the Burundian territory. However, the longest crisis period that faced Burundi (more than a decade) did not only destroy human lives but also caused destruction of all sorts of infrastructure. Thus, drinking water supply facilities were not spared, which exposed populations to hygienic problems and related diseases. However, the Government of Burundi has made efforts to rehabilitate basic infrastructure and water was not either neglected. A major part of the population has access to drinking water.

In order to clarify the issue of gender mainstreaming into the sector of water and sanitation, distributors and users should answer the following questions to ensure easy access of all layers of population including all social categories, namely; men, women, girls and boys:

- Is there any difference between men and women for demand and use of water and sanitation?
- Does water and sanitation availability differently affect men and women?
- In absence of running water, who is responsible for water collection? How much time does it take and what is the effect of that activity on participation to other activities?
- What is its consequence on children's school enrolment?

Whatever the case may be, it is important for planners to revisit their water-related policies and programs/ projects (distribution, management, etc.) in order to make sure of the level of consideration of men's and women's needs.

3.4.7 Research and Documentation

As a country that considers gender as a crosscutting issue, Burundi encourages gender-related research. That research is mainly focused on drafting policies and action plans for implementing policies and programs, drafting project proposals and reports and other periodic or one-time actions to be conducted.

Other studies are conducted in order to identify data that may serve as the basis for formulating policies and different strategies. Those are studies produced by ISTEERBU, whose major mission is to promote statistical activities in Burundi, conduct socio-economic activities based on the country's statistics, coordinate statistical data collection, processing, conservation and dissemination, etc. based on the previous information, it should be noted that the Burundian statistical system is decentralized, which means that ISTEERBU coordinates all other statistics units existing in Burundi.

Apart from ISTEERBU, other public as well as private institutions conduct research and studies. A case in point is higher learning institutions, UN Agencies, development partners, civil society organizations, etc.

However, research that generates sex-disaggregated data is still too little to be helpful in formulating policies and strategies that target promotion of equality and equity between people of both sexes.

3.4.8 Gender, Peace and Conflict Resolution

The conflicts that Burundi experienced for more than a decade caused heavy losses in terms of material and human resources which affected the various social categories leading to a multitude of consequences. The following social categories were differently affected by depending on a number of factors including social status, age and sex. Women, children and other vulnerable groups were the most affected by the conflicts.

The following lines explores the impact that the conflict had had on women, men and children.

3.4.8.1 The impact of armed conflicts on women

The armed conflicts affected women in various aspects and the main ones are discussed in the sections below.

3.4.8.1.1 Impact on the family structure

The 1993 crisis caused heavy losses of human lives especially men as they are generally the mostly targeted in time of wars and armed conflicts. This led to increased number of widows that amounted from 11.8% in 1990 to 26% in 1993¹⁶. In some provinces the number of women heads of households articulates around 50% in the sites of displaced persons. This is the case in provinces such as Mwaro (55%), Gitega (51%) and Kayanza (53%)¹⁷. These widows have to play the role of heads of families, which was not traditionally reserved to them. Therefore, they are neither socially nor economically prepared to assume the new responsibility. Thus, women heads of families are vulnerable and confronted with several difficulties in their struggle for the survival of their families. find themselves in situations of vulnerability They need an adequate and sustainable assistance.

3.4.8.1.2 Sexual violence

The war amplified the phenomenon of rape and sexual violence subjected to women and girls. The 2005 report issued by the *Ligue Iteka* highlights cases of rape and sexual violence that led to death of the victims. In the same report emphasis is also placed on cases of domestic violence, whereby women are murdered by their husbands or relatives. It is worth mentioning that cases of rape of women are increasing on a year basis as shown in the table below.

¹⁶ Commission Economique pour l'Afrique, Centre de Développement Sous-régional pour L'Afrique de l'Est. Voir Etude sur la Perspective Genre dans la Reconstruction Post-Conflict au Burundi, 2006.

¹⁷ Opcit p25.

Table 2 : Trend of rape

YEAR	2003	2004	2005
NUMBER OF VICTIMS	983	1675	1791

Source : Annual report on human rights, 2005.

Table 2 shows that the number of rape cases increases by year and it goes without saying that many cases are those that are not reported.

3.4.8.1.3 Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence is a serious issue with women being the majority among the victims. In Burundi like in many other countries women are battered (even killed) by their husbands because they have not given baby boys. The bulk of domestic violence is gender-based. Majority of young girls do not go to school because their gender wants them to stay at home and assist their mothers to do domestic chores.

3.4.8.1.4 HIV/AIDS Status

The number of women infected by HIV/AIDS increases in time of wars and armed conflicts as they are the majority of targets of rape and other forms of sexual violence that serve as channels for sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS. The increase of the number of widows and orphans and the rate of sexual violence are among the major causes of the HIV/AIDS seroprevalence reported in 2002: the report indicates that the rate of HIV/AIDS was 13% among women and 5.5% among men in urban areas; 13.7% as opposed to 6.8% in semi-urban areas and 2.9% as opposed to 2.9% in rural areas.

3.4.8.1.5 **Women and poverty**

The crisis has aggravated the socio-economic situation of women. On top of lack of production means (credits, land, etc) and skills facing women due to patriarchy that gives more powers to men than women, a significant number of women found themselves in displaced camps where living conditions are more severe to them than men. Apart from constraints associated with life in displaced camps, women especially widows and young girls are easy preys of perpetrators of different forms of violence including sexual violence, domestic violence, economic violence and many others. This situation exacerbates women's poverty, which requires interventions beyond their capacity.

3.4.8.1.6 **Impact of conflicts on men**

Men are also victims of armed conflicts. Apart from the fact that they are the majority among the people targeted by wars and armed conflicts, men are weakened by the loss of their possessions, loss of employment and other things that handicap their lives. As breadwinners, men are psychologically diminished as they find themselves in situations whereby they are not able to meet the needs of their families

It has been noticed that men living in displaced camps change easily their behaviors becoming irresponsible or sexual delinquent, which exposes them to sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS and others.

Another important case is that of demobilized soldiers who are also vulnerable in a post-conflict context that does not integrate them in an adequate manner. They can fall in the trap of alcoholism, armed thefts and rape. Sometimes former soldiers commit suicides. In Burundi, unemployment and deterioration of living conditions have weakened households, which caused family conflicts and sometimes divorces.

Interventions in the area of gender should take into account the different cases of vulnerable groups among men.

3.4.8.1.6 Impact of armed conflicts on children

Crisis has affected children under different forms. Children have experienced various acts of violence on daily basis. Number of children lost their parents and relatives and they are part of displaced populations and refugees.

Children have been victims of all forms of violence including sexual violence, and they continue to suffer trauma caused by insecurity, ongoing displacements and scenes of violence they watch or in which they may have participated directly.

Due to the crisis, a number of children became heads of households and they are increasingly living in the streets. The number of HIV/AIDS orphans has increased due to the fact that the war has increased the infection rate of the pandemics. These children become double victims of HIV/AIDS: by losing their parents, these children become easy prey of perpetrators of sexual violence that serve as entry point for the same disease.

Thousands of minors were recruited as children soldiers and they were led to kill, commit illegal acts and other abuses of human rights, including rape, destructions and large-scale lootings.

A significant number of children were subjected to immoral phenomena such delinquency, prostitution, begging, which actually increased due to conflicts.

The National Policy on orphans and other vulnerable children classifies categories of children as follows:

- a) **Children victims of stigma discrimination: children living with disability,** enfants batwa, albinos, children born from one parent black another white, girls, children born from a single mother;

- b) **Children victims of violence, abuse, exploitation and negligence :** children victims of worse forms of works, children soldiers, battered children, abandoned children, children victims of selling children, children illegally adopted, children affected by conflicts, children spoiled;
- c) **Children victims of gender-based violence :** girls raped, early married girls, girls with premature pregnancy, children victims of violence, exploitation and sexual abuse;
- d) **Children with no family care :** children orphans, children heads of households, street children, children living in temporary families, children living in institutions, children living with their mothers in prisons;
- e) **Children in precarious situations:** displaced children, children refugees, unaccompanied children, children living in families where by poverty does not allow them to access necessary care ;
- f) **Children faced with law :** children accusing, children accused, witnesses, children in contact with transitional justice mechanisms;
- g) **Children infected or affected by HIV/AIDS or other diseases.**

The situation described above on vulnerable children proves that there is still a long way to go in terms of addressing gender related issues of vulnerable groups. This requires a strong commitment on the side of the stakeholders who need to adopt appropriate strategies for each case in order to achieve sustainable development for both Burundian women and men.

3.4.9 Effort made by Burundi

Gender, peace and conflict resolution are dimensions that should be taken into account to ensure sustainable development in society. Burundi is trying to translate that reality into

action by implementing Resolution 1325 as it should be observed in the increasing participation of Burundian women in decision-making organs. Thus, the rate of women participation in Government has increased from 4.5% in 1998 to 15.5% in 2003.

The establishment of a transitional National Assembly has led to an extension and increase of the rate of women's participation to 19.14% in 2001 while it was 15.7% in 1993¹⁸.

It should however be acknowledged that the adoption of Resolution 1325 did not have an immediate impact on the behavior of Burundian actors. It is the struggle of women inspired by Beijing Platform, as well as other international instruments, such as CEDAW, that facilitated the understanding of decision-makers to include more women in decision-making organs.

Burundian women also played a key role in the Arusha process by using their experience and skills, which led to the signing of the Arusha Agreement reflecting in a certain level of gender dimension. Thus, the «Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi» provides for 30% of women in decision-making organs. During those negotiations, Burundians (men and women) saw with their own eyes the significant role that can be played by women through the promotion of non-violent forms of conflict resolution, something that the Government of Burundi has ever since encouraged and continues to do so as described in different national instruments.

Nonetheless, more efforts should be made to allow equal participation of men and women in all peace processes. Gender mainstreaming into armed conflict resolution leaves a lot to be desired, and research aimed at identifying innovative mechanisms to control violence and facilitate conflict resolution is to be encouraged. More efforts should also be made by putting in place mechanisms and programs aimed at controlling violence facing men, women, girls and boys, but a special emphasis should be on violence against women and children.

¹⁸ La Résolution 1325: D'une application hésitante à une politique volontariste. Association Dushirehamwe, Bujumbura, Janvier 2008. P29

Even more efforts should be made in implementing Resolution 1325. Research findings showed that only 44% of actors know about that resolution while 56% do not know much about it.¹⁹ However, it is worth mentioning that an important step has been made through the development of a plan of action for the implementation of this resolution.

CHAPTER IV: IDENTIFIED BEST PRACTICES

The following best practices were identified with the participation of consulted key stakeholders. Although the impact of some of those practices on the Burundian society was not demonstrated, they were identified because they have the potential to make a gender-sensitive transformation.

- 1 The entry of women in the *Ubushingantahe* institution traditionally reserved for men. The *Ubushingantahe* institution used to play a very significant role in conflict resolution. Only men known to be people of integrity were chosen to be members of that institution. The institution traditionally served as justice courts. Today with the election of women in that institution, Burundi has proven acknowledgment of women's right to publicly participate in conflict resolution;
- 2 The establishment of a Unit in charge of female education within the Ministry of Education has much contributed to reducing gender-related disparities in primary education. Thus, the gap between girls and boys that was 18% in 1997 against girls has been brought down to 6.4% in 2002 ;
- 3 The food distribution by WFP to families who send their girls children to school has significantly increased the numbers of girls in primary schools ;

¹⁹ La Résolution 1325: D'une application hésitante a une politique volontariste. Association Dushirehamwe, Bujumbura, Janvier 2008. P19

- 4 Free primary education and construction of Communal Colleges have had a very positive impact on girls' education;
- 5 A girl's orientation program was put in place by the Ministry of Education, which contributes to the increase of the numbers of females, especially in courses traditionally reserved for males;
- 6 The training of traditional birth attendants by the Ministry of Health and providing maternity related services free of charge contributed to the increase of delivery rates in an assisted environment. Thus, that rate increased from 17% in 2002 to 22.04% in 2004 ;
- 7 The women's participation in decision-making in the National Assembly and Senate (30%) contributed to the awareness of women about their role in Burundian leadership;
- 8 The girl with an undesired pregnancy may go back to school after the baby's weaning. That contributes to increasing the proportion of females in both primary and secondary education;

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The gender analysis in the context of Burundi aimed at identifying existing inequalities between men and women, which is a major obstacle to national sustainable development. Inequalities were identified in areas thought to be a priority. However, findings of the analysis were compiled to adapt to the East African Community's priorities as identified in its «Gender and Community Development Framework». Inequalities between men and women were therefore identified in the following areas; legal frameworks, institutional mechanisms, capacity building for individuals, households, and communities, gender and community development mainstreaming into macro-economic and sector policies and programs (agriculture, health, culture and traditions, education, trade and services, water and sanitation), research and documentation, gender, and peace and conflict resolutions.

Analysis underscored the efforts made by the Government of Burundi in the area of gender and identified existing inequalities between men and women that need to be addressed. The following recommendations were formulated as possible solutions to identified gender inequalities:

A To the Government of Burundi

- 1 To ensure coordination of the implementation of the national gender policy by all actors intervening in both public and private sector development;
- 2 To continue encouraging and supporting development and application of appropriate technology to alleviate the weight of the population works, especially women's;
- 3 To distribute agro-pastoral inputs to rural populations for more productive agriculture and livestock by placing a special emphasis on women-headed households;

- 4 To pass the law on succession, matrimonial regimes and liberalities to allow women to have access to and control over land, which is one of the major production factors;
- 5 To take initiatives aimed at increasing the rate of female education especially in higher education while putting a special emphasis on areas traditionally reserved for men, such as pure science and technology;
- 6 To encourage both public and private universities to put in place mechanisms that facilitate transformation of academic environments into gender-sensitive environments in order to increase the percentage of female candidates;
- 7 To encourage the creation of professional secondary schools and higher technical institutions that promote women's participation for a gender sensitive national labor force;
- 8 To grant scholarships to girls from very poor families;
- 9 To put in place a law to facilitate school reintegration of single mothers and to take measures to discourage men that are behind unwanted pregnancies;
- 10 To encourage the teaching of reproductive health as an academic program;
- 11 To encourage the establishment of a Faculty or a Department of gender and community development in tertiary education;
- 12 To encourage the incorporation of gender concept within the curricula at primary and secondary school levels;

- 13 To put in place strategies aimed at promoting women's participation in commercial activities;
- 14 To support the Burundian association of Women Entrepreneurs [Association des Femmes Entrepreneurs du Burundi (AFAB)] by putting in place mechanisms that make it easy to access market for its members' products and professional exchange with foreign women entrepreneurs;
- 15 To put in place mechanisms aimed at strengthening cultural values that facilitate gender promotion and discourage those sustaining existing inequalities which are, among others, the basis for different forms of violence of which women are victims;
- 16 To encourage and support collaboration between modern doctors and traditional healers to work together in order to reduce the mortality and morbidity rate, especially among women and children;
- 17 To support initiatives aimed at reducing the HIV/AIDS prevalence;
- 18 To develop specific strategies for each vulnerable group to assist in addressing the endemic poverty and other difficulties facing them.

B To United Nations Agencies

- 1 To support research aimed at eradicating violence against women;
- 2 To support identification of good practices and cultural opportunities for gender promotion;
- 3 To support awareness-raising and training on gender, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health and gender-based violence;

- 4 To support monitoring and evaluation of gender-related activities through training of stakeholders that expressed the need for drafting gender-sensitive indicators;
- 5 To support networking among stakeholders to facilitate information exchange on gender related issues.

C To the Civil Society

- 1 To participate actively in advocacy aimed at promoting gender;
- 2 To multiply awareness-raising and training seminars on gender issues, notably women's participation to decision-making, gender-based violence, access to and control over factors of production, etc;
- 3 To encourage needs assessment through baseline studies before designing project proposal to be able to respond to real needs of beneficiaries;
- 4 To support initiatives aimed at promoting cultural values conducive for gender promotion;
- 5 To continue encouraging collaboration mechanisms with Government for better coordination of gender-related activities.

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