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MÉMORANDUM

TO : THE BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

**FROM : Kordjé BEDOUMRA
Secretary General**

SUBJECT : ERITREA : GENDER PROFILE *

Please find attached, the above-mentioned document.

Attach:

CC.: The President

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**Extension 2046
Extension 2643**

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FUND



ERITREA

GENDER PROFILE

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Human Development Department (OSHD)

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	African Development Bank
ACORD	Agency for Cooperation, Research and Development
ACT	Artemisinin-Based Combination Therapy
ANC	Ante-Natal Care
AHSAR	Annual Health Services Activity Report
ARI	Acute Respiratory Infection
ATTI	Asmara Teacher Training Institute
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
BIRR	Ethiopian Currency
CCE	The Civil Code of Eritrea
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CMR	Child Mortality Rate
CPR	Contraceptive Prevalence rate
DKB	Zoba Debubawi Keyih Bahari (Southern Red Sea Region)
ECD	Early Childhood Development
EDHS	Eritrea: Demographic Health Survey
EFA	Education for All
ELF	Eritrean Liberation Front
EmOC	Emergency Obstetric Care
EPI	Expanded Program of Immunization
ESDP	Education Sector Development Programme
EPLF	Eritrean Peoples' Liberation Front
FAS	Farmers Advisory Service
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FHH	Female Headed Households
FP	Family Planning
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GPI	Gender Disparity Index
GSE	Government of the State of Eritrea
HAMSET	HIV/AIDS, Malaria and TB Control
HC	Health Centres
HOs	Hospitals
HS	Health Stations
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IPD	In-patient Department
I-PRSP	Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
LLINs	Long Lasting Insecticides Treated Bed Nets
LSMS	Living Standard Measurement Survey
MCH	Mother and Child health Care
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MEM	Ministry of Energy and Mines
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOF	Ministry of Fisheries

MOLHW	Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare
MOLWE	Ministry of Land, Water and Environment
MOH	Ministry of Health
NAKFA	Eritrean Currency
NATCoD	National AIDS and TB Control Department
NEP	New Educational Policy
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NFSS	National Food Security Strategy (NFSS 2003)
NGM	National Gender Machinery
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NGAP	National Gender Action Plan
NMCP	National Malaria Control Program
NPA	National Plan of Action
NUEW	National Union of Eritrean Women
NUEYS	National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students
OAU	Organization of Africa Union
OBE	Obstetric emergency
ONTH	Orota National Referral and Teaching Hospital
OPD	Out-patient Department
PERA	Proclamation for the Establishment of Regional Administration
PHAST	Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation Tools
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
RET	Renewable Energy Resources and Technologies
RH	Reproductive Health
RMC	Regional Member Countries
SIDA	Swedish development Assistance
SKB	Semenawi Keyih Bahri (Northern Red Sea Region)
SMCP	Savings and Micro Credit Program
SMEDU	Small and Medium Enterprise Development Unit
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
TB	Tuberculosis
TBA _s	Traditional Birth Attendants
TCC	Transitional Civil Code
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNMEE	United Nations Military Observers to Eritrea and Ethiopia
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UoA	University of Asmara
U5	Under Five
VCT	Voluntary Counselling and Testing
VPD	Vaccine preventable Diseases
VPD _s	Vaccine preventable diseases
WRD	Water Resources Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction and Background

The African Development Bank is supporting member countries to develop gender profiles to assist gender mainstreaming in Regional Member Countries. The gender-profile identifies gender related policy and programme interventions, which lead to poverty alleviation, economic growth and human development.

2. Historical and Socio-Economic Profile

Eritrea was an Italian colony from 1890 until 1941, when British forces defeated the Italians in Eritrea and placed it under British military administration. In 1952 the United Nations resolution to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia against the will of the people of Eritrea went into effect. In 1961, realizing that all peaceful political means towards realizing self-determination had come to a dead end, Eritrea started a liberation struggle against Ethiopia which lasted 30 years. A year later, in 1962, Ethiopia unilaterally abrogated the federal arrangement and annexed Eritrea as its 14th province. One third of the fighters were women and during the struggle gender relations were equalised. After independence gender equality goals of the struggle were in many ways faced challenges from deep traditional values. Another legacy of the struggle is the prevalence of female headed households (FFH), which make up 38 to 46.7% (EDHS 2002). The border conflict with Ethiopia has further increased the number of households run by women. While Eritrea is one of the poorest countries in the world it has been on track with most Millennium Development Goals (MDG) except MDG 1 on poverty and MDG 2 on universal primary education. Progress on MDG 7 on sustainable development cannot be conclusively assessed due to lack of data.

3. Gender Policy, Institutional and Legal Framework

3.1 The Eritrean government is committed to gender equality and has ratified relevant international conventions. The constitution also enshrines gender equality. Eritrea has formulated a National Gender policy and Action Plan and national development policies, such as the Macro Policy and the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP), to affirm the commitment of the government to gender equality. The National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW) has its history in the liberation struggle as the women's wing of the Eritrea Peoples Liberation Front and is now the largest NGO dealing with gender equality. It is mandated by the government to act as national gender machinery. It has broad presence on the ground but lacks a network of gender focal persons in the national ministries which weaken capacity and influence. It is mandated to both coordinate and monitor gender-related activities and to implement them, which causes the organisation to be overstretched.

3.2 The Eritrean government has gone through an ambitious legal reform process, which has supported the commitment to gender equality. Notable among the legal provisions are Labour and Land Reform Proclamations and the legal proclamation which rendered female genital mutilation (FGM) a criminal offence.

4. Gender Analysis by Sector

4.1 The **macro-economic framework** of Eritrea builds on the need for rapid economic growth and poverty alleviation. Women make up 30% of the workforce and are heavily represented in the informal sector and run 40% of all small and medium enterprises. Eritrea has several micro-finance schemes run by the government and NGOs. Not all areas are covered, however.

4.2 While **agriculture** is the most important sector of the Eritrean economy providing 70% of the population with its livelihood, it only accounts for 39% of GDP attesting to the fact that it is not well developed. The sector is hampered by antiquated methods, dependency on irregular rainfall and shortage of male labour. Many female-headed households are constrained in their food production because of male labour shortage and work long hours. While land laws do not discriminate against women, there are disadvantages due to lack of extension services, training and credit.

4.3 In the **education sector** enrolment of female students is considerably lower than those of boys at all levels. In technical and vocational education and training the enrolment of girls has continued to grow and has now reached the established quota of 30%. By contrast women constitute 89% of learners in adult education. The challenges of female learners include lack of schools in remote areas, long school distances, parental scepticism, rigid formal schooling, shortage of adequate female role models and early marriage.

4.4 In the **health sector** maternal mortality ratios are high and are due to unsafe abortion, harmful traditional practices, low levels of education and traditional gender roles. Distance to health facilities and the cost of transport are also reasons preventing pregnant women from seeking care. Many women instead seek the care of traditional birth attendants. Other reproductive health issues that need attention are low contraceptive use, early marriage and childbirth, female genital mutilation and obstetric fistulas, which are treated in a dedicated hospital in Mendefera.

4.5 In the **infrastructure sector** much needs to be done. Electricity coverage in Eritrea is one of the lowest in the world, particularly in rural areas (3% only). Eritrea is also facing a serious fuel wood crisis due to overuse of wood fuel. Improved traditional *mogogo* stoves which can be produced locally are being popularized to save energy and protect the environment. Water is also scarce in Eritrea and 34.6% of rural populations are estimated to use water from unprotected sources. Water harvesting techniques have been popularized to ease water shortages. Sanitation coverage is very low in rural areas (1.3%). Eritrea's road network is also lacking with only 8.5% of roads paved. Significant progress has been made in Eritrea, both in the services and physical aspects of infrastructure, thereby lessening the burden of transport both to women and men.

5. Cross –cutting issues

5.1 As mentioned the fuel-wood crisis is one of the major challenges in the **environment sector**. Use of wood fuel causes soil degradation and deforestation, and it increases the workload of women since fuel wood collection requires more time and energy.

5.2 **HIV/AIDS** prevalence rates are relatively low and have fallen. Infection rate among women who visit anti-natal services was 2.4% in 2005. In 2008, this rate has gone down to 1.8%. Urban prevalence rates are substantially higher than rural prevalence rates, and young women are particularly at risk. According to MOH latest reports indicate that condom distribution in the country is around 6 million annually, and awareness about the dangers of HIV/AIDS infection is high.

5.3 Eritrea has a legislated quota in **decision-making**, reserving 30% of seats for women in provincial and district administration and in national parliament. Affirmative action regulations also exist, stipulating the minimum number of women in community courts, land tenure committees, farmer groups and other local-level decision-making bodies. However women currently make up 22% of National Assembly members only, suggesting that establishing a quota is not sufficient to draw women into national politics. Currently, women make up 17.6% of ministerial positions in the cabinet. Women's participation in decision making is stronger at lower levels.

5.4 **Gender based violence (GBV)** takes many forms in Eritrea. Forced early marriage is still common in rural areas even though the legal age of marriage has been set at 18 years. Domestic violence is not systematically reported, leaving prevalence rates unknown. FGM is a serious problem in Eritrea, affecting 89% of all women. A National Strategy on Female Genital Mutilation Abandonment has been formulated in 2006 and a proclamation rendered FGM a criminal offence in 2007.

6. Conclusions

Eritrea has gone a long way towards achieving gender equality. Areas that need urgent attentions are sensitization on and enforcement of new legal provision which protect the rights of women, further support beyond the quota to facilitate women's participation in decision making and the expansion of micro-credit facilities for women. The national gender machinery needs to be reorganised and mandates of coordination and implementation be separated while gender focal points need to be strengthened and the relationship of NUEW to ministries be clarified.

Agricultural service provision needs to take into account of the fact that women provide most of agricultural labour and seek to remove constraints due to insufficient male labour at present. Women need to be also included fully in efforts to reverse environmental degradation. The growing gaps between girls' and boys' enrolment and the high drop-out rate of boys in higher levels of the education system need to be investigated and reversed. Contraceptive use needs to be increased through integrated service delivery and youth friendly clinics and work to eradicate FGM needs to be expanded and deepened. Facilities that offer fistula repairs need to be expanded.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Objectives of the Study

1.1 The African Development Bank Group's (ADB) gender policy, approved in July 2001, seeks to provide a framework for the mainstreaming of gender in Bank operations and to assist African Regional Member Countries (RMCs) in obtaining gender equality objectives. The policy is designed to concretise the commitment of the ADB to promote gender equality as a means to reduce poverty and foster economic development on the continent. This broad objective is contained in the Bank's Vision (1999) in which gender is singled out as a priority cross-cutting issue which must permeate all Bank operations. The Vision document also requires the Bank to work closely with RMCs to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. This gender profile is part of the Bank's gender equality work in RMCs which seeks to assist and encourage gender mainstreaming activities both in Eritrea and in the Bank.

1.2 The Eritrea Gender Profile identifies specific gender issues relevant at both macro economic and sectoral levels and in cross cutting areas. It tries to update and expand earlier gender profiles, such as the 1994 Gender Profile prepared by the Institute of Development Studies in Brighton for Danish International Development Assistance (Danida) and the 1996 Eritrea Country Gender Profile prepared by Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). It also complements various reports of the Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the MDG reports. The aim of this report is to present GSE and interested development partners with a document to use for gender sensitive development planning. This profile seeks to identify the short and long-term gender concerns relevant to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Box 1: Stakeholder Consultation

The study has used a participatory approach including a one-day stakeholders' workshop held in Asmara which gathered participants from government, multilateral donors and NGOs. The government participants presented gender gaps in their respective sectors and then proceeded to break out in working groups where sector challenges, best practices and sector specific recommendations were made.

Participants pointed to the need for credible gender focal points in ministries, to the need for better monitoring of time bound results, for the inclusion of women in training, for the inclusion of men in reproductive health and the need to collect more gender disaggregated data to introduce gender budgeting exercises and for civic education, to name but a few. Many of the recommendations were integrated into chapter 6.

Methodology

1.3 The methodology adopted in carrying out this exercise included desk and internet research, data collection, analysis and reviews; meetings and interviews with key stakeholders; and a one day workshop. Meetings and consultations were held with NUEW, ministries and government agencies, the United Nations Organisations (FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA), The World Bank, a small number of Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders. Fieldtrips were organised to Keren, Mendefera and to the Serejeqa project area of the NGO Toker.

1.4 Most data related to challenges and recommendations are derived from face-to-face interviews, contributions of participants at the stakeholders' workshop (see Box 1 above) and from relevant published data supplied by stakeholders. This review is meant to highlight the main challenges in the area of gender equality. Every effort was made to present the latest available information, however gaps might remain in the text due to lack of data. Given the nature of this study many other authors' works were reviewed and they are acknowledged in the reference section.

Format of the Document

1.5 Section 2 gives an overview of Eritrea. Section 3 identifies legal and policy frameworks for gender activities. Sections 4 and 5 examine each sector and cross-cutting issues by giving an overview and identifying major gender gaps that need to be addressed. Chapter 6 gives the authors recommendations for possible interventions.

2. HISTORICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

2.1 Colonial and Post-Colonial History

2.1.1 Eritrea is one of the newly independent nations in Africa. It is bordered in the South by Ethiopia, the West and Northwest by the Sudan, in the extreme South East by Djibouti and in the East by the Red-Sea. The overall size of Eritrea is about 125,000 km² and it has a coastline of 1,200 km with more than 350 islands in its territorial waters.

2.1.2 Italy ruled Eritrea from 1890 as a colony until the British took over administration of the country from 1941 until 1952. Thereafter Eritrea was federated with Ethiopia. In 1962 Ethiopia unilaterally dissolved the Eritrean parliament and annexed Eritrea as Ethiopia's 14th province. A year before, a national liberation struggle was launched by the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) and was continued by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) until total liberation of the country in 1991.

The National Liberation Struggle

2.1.3 The war of liberation lasted for three decades until May 1991. Independence was declared in 1993. The war resulted in the virtual destruction of the economy and infrastructure. It is estimated that out of the total 2.3 million Eritreans before the war, 200,000 died of whom 65,000 were combatants. Some 90,000 children were orphaned and another 70,000 people suffered injury and/or permanent disability. Furthermore, a third of the Eritrean population was uprooted or dislocated as refugees, internally displaced persons or fighters, resulting in family disintegration and disruption.

2.1.4 Women were drawn into the struggle for independence from the beginning. Over one-third of the fighters (30,000) were women active both as combatants and in EPLF schools and hospitals. However, unlike in other independence struggles on the continent where women were used mainly in supporting roles, the EPLF assigned the majority of women to combat duty. The emancipation of women was central to the Cultural Revolution advocated by the EPLF, and gender equality was put into practice within the EPLF and in liberated areas. Arranged marriages, bride price, female genital mutilation and divorce by repudiation were discouraged among civilians in liberated areas, and in the EPLF they were replaced by "democratic

marriages” which also enabled women to initiate divorce. In fact many young women reputedly joined the struggle in order to avoid early marriage. In addition work was assigned on a basis of gender equality and childcare was considered a communal task.

2.1.5 The suspension of traditional gender roles during the struggle has played a major role in the social, economic and political reforms, which stressed the importance of women in society and raised their status. The promotion of gender equality has thus been an integral element of change and liberation. The National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW), established in 1979 as part of the EPLF mass organizations (see box 3), formulated its own programme and spearheaded gender equality and women’s emancipation to complement the goals of the struggle. Yet, its members were not sufficiently included in the leadership of the EPLF during the war.

2.1.6 The suspension of traditional gender roles in the struggle was not permanent. After independence an estimated 80% of demobilized women ex-fighters lacked appropriate resources, skills and jobs for civilian life. Moreover the very qualities that had made them good soldiers and heroes in the war were deemed as undesirable qualities in wives in civilian life. Many marriages concluded in the struggle were dissolved and the pressures to again conform to traditional values were strong. Many combatants felt betrayed as the skills they had developed during the struggle were no longer useful. Nonetheless Eritrean women supported by the national leadership, have been able to make a claim in independent Eritrea. For example, 21 members of the constitutional commission were women. Under the EPLF’s National Democratic Program of 1977, family values that promoted equal rights and status of women and men was nurtured during the liberation era, and progressive family and marriage guidelines were promulgated (EPLF Marriage Guidelines, 1984). In continuation of this, the constitution, ratified in 1997, refers to the institution of the family and asserts the equal rights of men and women within it. While much progress has been made to achieve gender equality, patriarchal values reasserted themselves after independence and hindered the full realisation of legal advances.

The Border Conflict with Ethiopia

2.1.7 In 1998 a border conflict with Ethiopia flared up. Deployment of a 4,200 strong UN peacekeeping force, the UN Mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), in a 25-kilometre buffer zone inside Eritrea took place following the signing of a peace agreement between the two countries in December of 2000. The Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), established in accordance with the peace agreement, rendered its final and binding verdict in April 2002 on the border delimitation and demarcation. However, the EEBC’s verdict was rejected by Ethiopia while Eritrea fully accepted it. Since then a no war/no peace situation has prevailed in Eritrea. The recent conflict has displaced over a million people, mainly farmers, which have prevented them from sustaining themselves. Land mines rendered a significant proportion of fertile farmland untenable. Major socio-economic infrastructure was destroyed. From 2000 to 2003 droughts exacerbated the already prevailing poverty by further reducing agricultural output. The high incidence of both *de facto* and *de jure* female-headed households due to the war has further exacerbated this situation, with a lack of male labour reducing agricultural output (see 2.2).

The administrative structure

2.1.8 Eritrea today has a decentralised system of government and administration. The country is divided into six *zobas* (regions), 55 sub-*zobas*, and 652 administrative villages (*kebabis*), which are responsible for over 2,700 village communities. GSE encourages people to move to

villages under *kebabis* to facilitate provision of social services. The National Parliament is the legislative body and members are elected by universal suffrage. The *zoba* has a legislative assembly called "*Baito*", whose members are elected by popular vote. The Governor is appointed by the Central Government and is the political head of the *zoba*, and is a member of cabinet at the national level. The lowest administrative structure is the Village Administration, which has a body (*Megabaaya*) representing household constituencies.

2.2 National Demographic and Poverty Indicators

2.2.1 A population census has never been conducted in Eritrea, and information on the size, distribution and characteristics of the population is scanty and unreliable. In the absence of dependable population information, it is difficult to measure or even estimate levels and trends in mortality and fertility. Hence estimates of the total population range widely. Based on the Government's assessment of 1998, the total population was 3.7 million. Taking a national rate of population increase of 3%, the population for 2007 was estimated to have been 4.9 million. It is estimated that the urban population was 17% of the total population in 1995 which grew to 19.5% in 2002. By 2015 it is projected to be 26.5%. Eritrea also has a high child dependency ratio with children under 15 years making up almost half of the population. This has serious implications on per capita income and the use of child labour for example.

2.2.2. Demographic and Health Surveys undertaken in 1995 and 2002 are the principal source of demographic estimates. They reflect a decline in family size from a total fertility rate (TFR) of 6.1% in 1995 to 4.8 in 2002. However the decline in fertility cannot be attributed to an increased use of contraception since the contraceptive prevalence rate has remained 8% for any method and 5.1% for modern methods since 1995. Results indicate that the decline in fertility is an outcome of the military mobilisation and displacement associated with the 1998-2000 border conflict with Ethiopia, and the no war/no peace situation thereafter has caused delayed age at marriage, and caused married women to be less likely to live with their husbands.

2.2.3 A striking feature of Eritrea and a heritage of the independence struggle (1961-1991) and the recent conflict with Ethiopia (1998-2000) is the high ratio of FHH, which in 2002 reached 38% to 52%. Almost half of the FHHs are estimated to be widowed. A high divorce rate of 16% after independence has also contributed to the number of FHH.

2.2.4 While Eritrea has made great strides with regard to delivery of education and health services, and has extended coverage of other infrastructure, much needs to be done. Eritrea's Human Development Index (2007/8) is 0.483 which gives the country a rank of 157th out of 177. The Human Poverty Index is 36.0% of the average, ranking Eritrea 76th among 108 developing countries. The Gender Development Index of 97.1 similarly placed Eritrea 137 out of 156 countries. According to the 2005 Millennium Development Report of the GOE, Eritrea was on track for all but Goal 1 on poverty and Goal 2 on primary school education. With regard to Goal 7 on water and environmental sustainability, Eritrea was on track with regard to provision of safe water but progress in environmental sustainability could not be assessed adequately due to inadequate data. With a nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita of USD 150, Eritrea remains one of the poorest countries in the world.

Poverty

2.2.5 Various national documents indicate that during the period 1990-2001 some 53% of all households fell below the national poverty line, and 44% of children under the age of five were

underweight for age. Furthermore domestic food production met on average not more than 60% of annual food requirements, with the result that almost two thirds of households were food insecure. The share of income spent on food is high, 66% nationwide and, interestingly, 71% in rural areas. In 2003 it was estimated that 66% of all Eritreans were poor. Among these, approximately 37% were living in extreme poverty. In Asmara, the incidence of poverty was 56%. The estimates also indicate that the poorest of the poor live in small urban areas, where poverty can be as high as 81%. In rural areas 65% of the population is below the poverty line. The extent of extreme poverty in rural areas is 39%.

2.2.6 In terms of poverty there is ample evidence that FHH are poorer than their male counterparts, with estimates suggesting that over 50 percent of FHH are below the poverty line. The fact that women earn less than half the male salary and that they lack household assets such as livestock, which acts as security in times of need, result in their greater vulnerability and poverty. Poor women in rural areas are often found in low paying manual labour in agriculture or construction. Because of the lack of male labour (particularly for ploughing) many FHH are forced to enter into share-cropping arrangements, or rent their fields against a portion of the harvest. This is not always beneficial to them since they are not able to subsist on crops and are forced to find income elsewhere.

3. GENDER POLICY, INSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Gender Policy Framework

3.1.1 In 1995 the government ratified Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). To ensure that the convention is easily accessible and understood, it has been translated into local languages. Other major international human rights instruments and conventions signed by the State of Eritrea include: the Convention on the Right of the Child (1994), the Beijing Platform of Action (1995), the International Convention on Abolition of Child Labour (2000), the MDGs (2000) and the International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2001). Viewed against prevailing negative cultural attitudes towards women, this shows a positive determination by GSE to advance the rights of women and children.

3.1.2 The country's ratified constitution of 1997 enshrines the rights of Eritrean women, guaranteeing equal rights to both women and men. The constitution prohibits any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, colour, gender, religion, disability, age, political view and social and economic status. Various articles in the constitution grant equal rights to women with the intention that they should be treated as equal to men when considering land use, family and marriage disputes, inheritance and the passing of citizenship to their children. These rights are captured in article 7.2 which states that any act that violates the human rights of women, or limits or otherwise thwarts their role and participation is prohibited.

3.1.3 NUEW, the NGO mandated by GSE as Eritrea's national machinery for the advancement of women, developed the **National Policy on Gender (2004)** which provides a framework for the integration of gender equality in national development planning. Priority areas of the policy are legal reforms and access to justice, political, economic and social empowerment, education, training and health. The policy allows for both mainstreaming and women targeted approaches,

encourages the formulation of gender sensitive indicators for monitoring results, the collection of gender disaggregated data and embraces affirmative action. The gender policy also provides for the assignment of gender focal persons in each ministry to coordinate and facilitate gender mainstreaming.

3.1.4 The **National Gender Action Plan (NGAP) (2003-2008)** specifies objectives and targets for the advancement of women to be applied by ministries and departments, local administration, donors, communities, teaching institutions and the private sector. It identifies resources and provides indicators for measuring progress. The action plan recommends the formation of technical working groups for all priority areas of the policy which should be coordinated by a Gender Planning and Monitoring Committee. The Committee is to report to NUEW, which would report directly to the Office of the President.

3.1.5 The country's **I-PRSP** (2004 - 2006) reiterates the government's commitment to further advance the status of women in key economic, political and social aspects of life. In addition the I-PRSP specifies measures to improve women's access to public and private sector employment, credit and skills training. A new development strategy has not been made available yet.

3.1.6 **The National Food Security Strategy** (2003) seeks to improve food security at household level and to enhance the capability of all women, in particular rural women and FHHs. In addition it aims to ease the workload of women through improved supply of safe drinking water and access to productive resources, credit, technology, skills training and productive resources, including land, post-harvest value addition and marketing. It also emphasises women's need for micro- and small-scale enterprise development.

3.2 Institutional Gender Framework

3.2.1 The responsibility of mainstreaming gender into programmes and projects is the collective responsibility of all national institutions, including NGOs and the private sector. NUEW is, however, mandated to co-ordinate gender mainstreaming activities and to be the lead advocate for Eritrean women. It is somewhat unusual that an NGO is mandated by government to act as national gender machinery (NGM) for the advancement of women, but the history of NUEW as the mass movement of women of the EPLF during the struggle might explain the role it has been accorded.

Box 2: The origins and work of NUEW

NUEW, popularly known by its Tigrinya acronym as HaMaDeIe, was formed in 1979 during the struggle for independence in order to mobilize women. It turned itself into an NGO in 1992. Mandated by government to act as national gender machinery for the advancement of women (NGM), NUEW has been involved in policy formulation, coordination and monitoring. As the largest women NGO it has also been involved in the implementation of projects, many of whom are funded by external donors, including multi-and bi-lateral donors, international NGOs and Eritrean women abroad.

NUEW projects include advocacy and awareness raising, training and supply of credit and economic empowerment projects. Notable are the projects and campaigns against FGM, literacy, computer, English and gender training, income generation through horticulture, handicraft production and the famous donkey/water project (see Box 7). NUEW also does training in communication and leadership and has been involved in formulating the national strategy and policy on girl's education and it is involved in the legal reform process. In addition NUEW has obligatory members on a number of committees at community and zoba levels, such as in village councils, Farmer's Advisory Services (FAS) committees, local development committees, land distribution committees, as well as in the private sector.

Assessments have shown that its considerable outreach and presence on the ground and good relationships to government departments at all levels are the strengths of NUEW. Its weaknesses include capacity constraints, lack of data base and information and communication technology, and a weak and unstable funding base. The UN agencies and Norwegian Church Aid have a longstanding relationship with NUEW and have funded many capacity building activities, have contributed financially to projects and programmes and supplied technical expertise for policy and strategy formulation.

3.2.2 NUEW has some 200,000 members in Eritrea and it maintains 58 offices inside the country and 18 chapters in countries around the world which are meant to organise Eritrean women abroad, inform host countries of NUEW activities and raise funds. With a strong presence at national, *zoba* and *kebab* levels, NUEW is well placed to fulfil its mandate. In addition, NUEW has historically been the champion of Eritrean women's advancement and has considerable experience in co-ordinating and implementing programmes. It also has a substantial outreach capacity. As the national machinery for the advancement of women NUEW acts as an advocate for legal protection, economic, social and cultural empowerment; identifies key gender gaps and bring them to the attention of the appropriate authorities; develops, and periodically updates, the NGAP and monitors its implementation; advocates for programmes and projects that target Eritrean women; and makes recommendations to government on new laws and policies and propose amendments to existing ones. NUEW is also mandated to establish a network of gender focal points or units in different sectors of the economy and coordinate their activities.

3.2.3 However, NUEW not only fulfils the functions of a NGM but is also the most prominent national NGO implementing programs and projects for women. The double role as both coordinator and implementer of gender equality programs and projects seriously overstretches the organisation and is likely to lead to conflict of interest. Since NUEW is mandated to monitor progress towards gender equality and coordinate initiatives, its own projects are subject to its oversight. The relationship of NUEW to ministries is also not clear since it is not part of the government as such.

3.2.4 The Gender Planning and Monitoring Committee, which is to bring together government and other stakeholders, cannot function due to the absence of gender focal points in ministries.

The fact that very few ministries have complied with the NGAP recommendation to appoint gender focal points would suggest that NUEW lacks powers to enforce implementation. While the policy holds ministers accountable for ensuring gender mainstreaming, this is neither sufficient nor practical since gender focal persons lower down in the structure are needed to do the daily work. It is not entirely clear what authority NUEW has to demand compliance with directives in ministries. NUEW has started to organise gender mainstreaming seminars with certain ministries, such as Education, Health and Water to encourage the formulation of sector-specific gender strategies and the appointment of gender focal points or establishment of gender units. The success of this approach is yet to be seen. Lack of gender disaggregated data in all but a few ministries makes it difficult if not impossible to monitor compliance and results.

3.2.5 The double role of NUEW is comprehensible in light of the fact that very few other NGOs are operating in the country, which would be able to implement gender equality activities. Currently active international NGOs include the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD), Norwegian Church Aid and the Lutheran World Federation. In addition to their humanitarian work, they are actively involved in promoting gender equality, especially with regard to access to finance, income generating activities and GBV including FGM. ACORD is the largest NGO provider of micro credit in the country. The national NGO Toker advocates for and pilots integrated rural development projects, which take a holistic development approach (see Box 5).

3.3 Legal Framework

3.3.1 Eritrea is a country of old customary laws and traditions many of which have been written several centuries ago, but amended in 1910. Customary laws still have a significant impact on the socio-cultural and socio-economic relations of Eritrean society and the fact that they are codified render them more difficult to change or supplant by modern civil codes. Although customary law is not recognized as an official source of law in Eritrea it enjoys a great deal of importance in practice. Because of lack of uniformity, as various Eritrean communities have their own customary laws, it makes blanket customary law application impossible. It has, however, maintained its importance in the Eritrean legal system through informal incorporation in the “modern laws.” For instance, while the age of majority according to the Civil Code is 18 years of age, the Civil Code also recognizes marriages between the age of 15 and 18 in recognition of Eritrean customary marriage practices. The establishment of Community Courts in 2001 with a mandate to apply national laws, but with flexibility to resort to customary procedures of amicable resolution of disputes, is another testimony to the importance of customary law in Eritrea

3.3.2 **Civil Laws - The New Draft Codes:** The first major and important action taken by the then Provisional Government of Eritrea in 1991, was to propose basic amendments regarding gender equality and fundamental women’s rights to the Transitional Civil Code. The first version of drafting of new codes by the Law Reform Committee established by the Ministry of Justice was done in 1997, although draft codes are still in the process of finalization. The draft codes are consistent with the principles and values endorsed by the National Charter and they promote and enforce gender equality. The Ministry of Justice supports the idea to harmonize the draft codes with principles and provisions of the Convention of the Rights of the Child and other important international gender-related conventions.

3.3.3 The Civil Code of Eritrea provides for the protection of the rights of the child whenever his/her interests demand. Considerations are also relating to marriage (family law), succession and dissolution of marriage. Even though the legal marriage age of girls is now set at 18 years, the country has problems with child betrothal and under-age marriage. According to the NUEW, girls are still married off at the age thirteen, often without their consent. Marriage by abduction/threat was an accepted phenomenon in the past, as was marriage to settle family disputes. Forced marriage has drastically declined in the last 15 years, but has not been totally eliminated. The practice of childhood betrothal is also said to be still common, particularly in rural areas. However the union cannot be entered into the civil register and will have no effect until both future spouses attain the legal marriage age. The practices are so ingrained in some rural areas that change will be slow. Data on the prevalence of these practices are unfortunately not available.

3.3.4 According to the **Transitional Civil Code (TCC)**, a petition for divorce can be made to the family arbitrators by the two spouses or by one of them. Any unilateral repudiation of the wife by the husband or vice versa has no effect. Efforts to reconcile cases go through family arbitration, and if unsuccessful the dissolution of marriage is finalized. If either the wife or husband do not agree with the settlement, it can be referred to the courts. Divorce is ordered under civil law by the court taking into account that the custody of the children be regulated, that their interests are considered, that husbands are ordered to pay maintenance for children, that common property is divided equally, that common debts are settled, and that either spouse has the right to take from the family home personal property. This, however, is not the case under **Sharia Law** where divorce cases are handled by “family arbitrators” appointed by each of the spouses or by court. Only the *Sharia* court is competent to decide whether a divorce has been lawfully pronounced by the family arbitrators or not. In both sharia and non-sharia laws, women are often not appointed as members of arbitration panels, depriving petitioning women of a balanced gender perspective in decision-making.

3.3.5 The draft civil code establishes that all forms of marriage (except under *sharia*) including customary and religious marriages must have common binding conditions that enhance women’s rights. The main articles of the revised civil and penal codes are:

- Women can enter into marriage freely, and are afforded the same rights as men. (Art.48)
- Marriage is based on the free consent of both partners and needs no parental consent.(Art.46)
- Law prohibits bride price and dowry (Art.49)
- Kidnapping for marriage is illegal (Art. 50)
- The legal age for marriage is raised to 18 years
- Marriage is a partnership, which gives a husband and wife equal rights as heads of their household. (Art.45)
- Paternity of Children born out of wedlock is determined by evidence and sworn testimony (irretraceable) of the mother. (Art. 60)

3.3.6 Whilst the Law of Eritrea is clearly defined in these contexts the application of the law in remote areas leaves much to be desired and from anecdotal evidence, it appears not to be applied consistently. According to NUEW due to the deep-rooted attitudes and cultures, as well as lack of education and limited knowledge of the reforms in marriage, family and human rights laws by both men and women has prevented people from exercising their rights and seeking justice.

3.3.7 The **Labour Proclamation** (Proc. No.118/2001) provides for the legal protection of women in employment. The proclamation specifies equal opportunity and maternal protection

benefits for women. **The Land Reform Proclamation (58/1994)** gives every citizen the right to use land without discrimination on the basis of sex, religion and ethnicity. With these women gained equal rights and the opportunity to access land for farming, building houses, and businesses both in rural and urban areas. Distribution of land is in most cases handled by land distribution committees at village and *kebab* level, which need to include women, who assist in deciding the priorities of distribution. According to a NUEW report in practice the negative attitudes of relevant authorities regarding women's land rights, particularly to agricultural land hinder the application of the proclamation in some areas.

3.3.8 **The Community Courts Proclamation (Proclamation No. 132/2003)** states that every community court must have at least one woman judge among its three elected judges (33%). There are roughly 386 community courts, which are administered and coordinated from decentralised zonal coordination offices. **Proclamation No. 86/1996**, which defines powers and prerogatives of regional administrations, states that 30% of the seats of Regional Assemblies would be reserved for women.

3.3.9 One of the most prominent forms of violence against women is FGM. This extreme form of violence has been effectively prohibited by **Proclamation No.158/2007**. It provides that persons performing female circumcision shall be punished with imprisonment of up to three years and a heavy fine. Death through circumcision carries imprisonment up to ten years. Those who request, incite or promote female circumcision can also be imprisoned for six months and be fined (compare chapter 5.4 on gender based violence).

3.3.10 Despite the extensive legal reform measures, areas of the law which are ambivalent or which offer loopholes allowing for gender discrimination, such as the law on rape, still exist. Given the codification of customary law they are harder to change as would be the case with orally transmitted customary law. This and the lack of knowledge on civil laws call for extensive sensitization and information campaigns as well as training of legal professionals and law enforcement officers. NUEW, for example, has done such work in the past. This needs to be urgently continued and extended.

Recommendations to the government:

- **To ensure that gender mainstreaming is undertaken in all ministries/sectors Gender Focal Points in ministries should be senior, named officials who take responsibility and report to their ministers. Sufficient financial and human resources must be made available and staff members must have sufficient authority and capacity to effectively influence the ministry's decision making. Publishing gender mainstreaming results of all ministries/departments can act as an incentive.**
- **NUEW is both an NGO and a NGM. This multiplicity of tasks might create conflicts of interest and overtax the capacity of NUEW. It is therefore recommended that a separation of roles and tasks is considered. This might mean a separation of NUEW into policy and implementation units, or the establishment of a gender department/unit within government which should be staffed with both NUEW members and civil servants.**
- **Lack of gender disaggregated data in most ministries makes it difficult to monitor progress/results of gender equality related activities. Officers should be trained in gender awareness, and mainstreaming of gender into data collection. The Central Statistical Office should also be included in the training and technical experts should be attached to the institution**
- **Since gender budgeting is a tool that forces ministries to identify gender gaps to cater for the different needs of women and men in their respective sectors, and to make budgetary**

allocations on the basis of a sound gender analysis, collection of gender disaggregated data becomes a necessity that needs to be supported by capacity building.

- Laws regarding rape for example need to be further adjusted to avoid abuse of the law by perpetrators and by the family of victims. The land proclamation also needs further thought to clarify the position of married women and women in polygamous marriages. It is recommended that a task force composed of members of relevant ministries and NUEW conduct a legal gender audit.

Recommendations to development partners:

- Awareness about law reforms regarding marriage, family and human right needs to be strengthened. Rural Women in particular need to be sensitized on their rights and educated on how to access justice. Law enforcement officers and the members of various committees need to be trained and sensitized about gender equality. Having women members on committees and in courts is not sufficient if the women are not gender sensitive.
- All development projects/programs financed in Eritrea need to make sure that it builds the capacity of gender focal points and staff to collect and analyze gender disaggregated data.
- Development Partners need to further strengthen NUEW and GFPs.

4. GENDER ANALYSIS BY SECTOR

4.1 Macro-economic Framework

4.1.1 Rapid economic growth is a key objective of development policy in Eritrea. Though economic growth is not a sufficient condition for reducing poverty and raising living standards, it is indispensable and crucial in the attainment of the MDGs. Accordingly, since independence GSE has given high priority to policies and programs aimed at achieving economic growth and development. The government's commitment to poverty reduction is enshrined and articulated in all major policy documents, such as The Macro-Policy of 1994, the I-PRSP (2004) and the Food Security Strategy (2004).

The Budgeting Process

4.1.2 Although the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) financed in 2005 training of government officials and NUEW on gender budgeting, sector budgets do not yet address gender concerns. The use of gender disaggregated data in the preparation of annual estimates through which Government revenue is distributed does not yet require gender disaggregated data. Since there is a serious gap in the availability of gender disaggregated data, sector financial planning, investment programs and/or budgeting exercises may not adequately address the needs of men and women. In other words, sector investment programs should have required departments and line ministries to consider the impact of their investment programs and budgetary allocations on men and women. The sector specific gender mainstreaming plans prepared and adopted by the Ministries of Health and Education also do not specify how gender concerns could be integrated into the budget process.

Employment

4.1.3 Women play an important role in the Eritrean economy. Many enterprises are owned and managed by women, and they make up more than 30% of the workforce in manufacturing, service sectors and trade. In terms of total employment status, 69% of men and 16% of women aged 15 years and above were formally employed in 2000/01. The proportion of the "currently employed" category peaked at age 30-34 for men (93%) and 25-29 for women (26%). For both

sexes there was a moderate decline in employment at age 60 and above. Almost half of men aged 65 and above were employed the month before the survey. The vast majority of children (98.7%) attended school and the rest were employed. Boys were more likely to be employed than girls (4% and 1% respectively). In terms of urban/ rural employment, there was a slight difference in the level of current employment for men with rural men more likely to be employed than urban men. By contrast women were almost three times more likely to be employed in urban areas.

Women in Small Businesses and in the Informal Sector

4.1.4 While Eritrea's small and medium enterprise (SME) sector holds great potential, it has remained under-developed. GSE has established a Small and Medium Enterprise Development Unit (SMEDU) in the Ministry of Trade and Industry mandated to support SMEs with free training, information and advice. A one-stop-shop for business licensing has also been established to simplify business registration processes. However according to the 2008 Doing Business ranking of the World Bank, Eritrea is still ranked last globally (178 countries) in dealing with licences and 5th to the last globally with starting a business. This would suggest that business processes need to be further simplified and opened more drastically to encourage private investment. Eritrea also ranked low with regard to obtaining credit (158).

4.1.5 Women owned 30-40% of micro-enterprises in Eritrea in 1996, which accounted for almost two-thirds of those in the production sector (brewing local drinks, basketry, broom, mat making, etc.), two fifths in the trade sector (hotels and guesthouses, petty trade, coffee shops, and retail trade) and one fourth in services (hair saloons and rental services). More than 60% of women are *de-facto* heads of their husbands' businesses. Later figures on the participation of women in the informal sector revealed that 67% of the women in the informal sector are engaged in trade, 21% in services, 11% in handcraft and the rest (2%) mainly in manufacturing/production and construction.

4.1.6 A 2008 study of women in the informal sector commissioned by NUEW revealed that the main reason for women to start a business in the informal sector include poverty (58%), unemployment and the need to increase income (18% and 13% respectively). In terms of location of the businesses 38% operate in open streets, 25% in market places, and 15% are mobile. Whatever the location, the majority of the businesses (85%) have no access to facilities (electricity, water, toilet and telephone). Fifty six percent of owners use own shoulder/back, 24% public buses and 7% manual carts for transport.

4.1.7 The main activities of informal sector operations include food and beverage, tailoring, carpentry, blacksmithing, retail shops, groceries and kiosks. Overall 71% of industries are located in rural areas with trade and manufacturing leading. The number of male-owned enterprises has been higher than female-owned ones in rural areas, while in urban areas female-owned enterprises pre-dominated. In 1999 close to 1.3 million MSEs employed 2.3 million people (20% of the country's total employment) and contributed 18% of overall and 25% of non-agricultural GDP. In the same year 75% of all employed were self-employed with most informal sector enterprises being family owned with minimal employment creation for people outside.

4.1.8 Informal businesses in Eritrea have become an important generator of employment and income. Women are the majority of the entrepreneurs in this sector, but they are not able to reach their full potential due to lack of access to suitable facilities, markets, finances, technology, information, training and business skills. In addition, excessive government/municipal rules and regulations and forced evictions and confiscations hinder them from thriving. These obstacles

create a vicious circle of poverty and high risk which, combined with the multiplicity of roles played by women, hinder them from reaching their full potential. Given that 93 % of women engaged in the informal sector spend their income to satisfy family needs, it can be assumed that the impact of supporting women's businesses will affect not just themselves.

Micro Finance

4.1.9 Lack of property and collateral make it difficult for Eritrean women to access capital in commercial banks, where they access only 9% of available credit. According to a NUEW study the source of start-up capital for small informal businesses was own savings for 72%, 41% received loans from friends and 31% from relatives. It is also reported that more than 10% of the respondents in the study had their initial loan application rejected largely due to severe competition from others. This would suggest that demand for credit is not satisfied through existing programmes.

4.1.10 The Ministry of Local Government established the **Savings and Micro Credit Programme (SMCP)** in 1996, as a component of the Eritrea Community Development Fund (CDF). The SMCP has since 2002 been operating as a semi- autonomous institution under the Ministry of National Development. It is the largest micro-credit provider in the country, operating in all six regions and 92% of sub-regions. It has to date established 357 village banks with 35,000 customers, 40% of whom are women.

4.1.11 SMCP has three main loan products, referred to as tiers of loans: Tier-1 loans target clients with no collateral and are given as group loans; Tier-II loans target small entrepreneurs with individual loans; and Tier-III loans are instant loans which were launched in 2006. They are targeted at government and private business employees. The 2007 report of SMCP revealed that credit is helping women to break cultural barriers and improved the livelihood of 87% of its clients. Repayment rates increased from 74% in 2006 to 80% in 2007. As of 2007 the main share of loans provided were agriculture (33%), services (59%), and manufacturing (2%). From 1997 to 2007 some 22,600 clients accessed the SMCP, of which 47% were women beneficiaries, 74% of whom were urban residents.

4.1.12 **The Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD)** is the largest non-governmental micro finance provider in the country, operating in the Southern, Central and Anseba zones. The objective of the initiative was to create a financially sustainable, people-controlled credit scheme. Between 1995 and 2005, ACORD disbursed more than USD10 million to 63,450 financially and socially marginalized people, such as FHH, poor farmers, ex-combatants and returnees. ACORD has now diversified its products from loans to life insurance (social protection) and livestock insurance for camels and cattle. The programme is to expand into a pension plan for rural areas and also to undertake house renovations for and introduce mobile phones to its clients in the near future.

4.1.13 Loans are divided into 3 cycles with increasing ceilings. Seventy percent are used for agriculture ventures, 26% for trade, 2.5% services and 1.5% for production. Fifty Three percent of ACORD loan clients are women who have a repayment rate of 99.9%. Saving is mandatory among clients. The groups for group guaranteed loans have been reduced to 3 members only, since women preferred to work with trusted friends. ACORD involves women at all levels of decision making (more than 25%). Most of ACORD's staff (68%) are female and are represented at the senior management level as managers, credit officers and financial controllers. In 2005 ACORD could meet only between 5-10% of credit demand.

4.1.14 NUEW micro-credit program started in 1995 but was hampered due to the Ethio – Eritrean conflict in the period of 1998 to 1999. During the early 2000s NUEW restarted set up a **micro-savings and credit program** with the assistance of donor funding. Loans are given to groups of 6-8 members after a week of training on different types of credit, application and best practices. NUEW has recently revived the micro credit programme in Gash Barka, Debub and Ma'ekel regions. A total of 4,071 women have benefited from the current NUEW programme.

Recommendation to government:

- **Women may be less likely to register their businesses because this is costly and cumbersome. Yet they may respond well to simplified registration procedures. Business licensing requirements are onerous and it is unclear if women will benefit from the current licensing reforms. Simplifying licensing and registration requirements would help women entrepreneurs. The one stop shop in the ministry of Trade and Industry needs to be made more accessible and branches need to be opened in the provinces.**

Recommendation to development partners and government:

- **Micro finance does not address the needs of women trying to expand beyond the micro-enterprise to medium scale businesses with larger capital needs. Financial products catering for medium-scale enterprises need to be expanded.**

4.2 Agricultural Sector

4.2.1 Agriculture is the most important sector of the Eritrean Economy with 70% (NSO) of the population depending on it for their livelihood. Official Statistics state that the sector accounts for about 39% (NSO) of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and contributes (29%) to the country's export earnings. Crop and livestock sectors together provide means of livelihood and basis for food security for the majority of the population. The GOE has made agriculture its top priority and through the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) is implementing its Food Security (2003) and growth strategy. The MOA has extended its structure to *zoba* and *sub-zoba* levels to support the sector.

Agricultural policy

4.2.2 The focus of the agricultural policy is (i) increased food security, rural employment and incomes; (ii) improved supply of raw materials for domestic processing industries; and (iii) halting the degradation of the natural resource base. The current strategies formulated to achieve these goals are primarily steps to increase the productivity of, and income from, farms by using modern farming methods and practices, to expand cultivated areas with high productive potential and to rehabilitate existing commercial farms. These measures are complimented by actions to protect the environment through massive terracing, reforestation and water harvesting programs. The government favours an integrated rural development approach, which seeks to combine agricultural modernization, watershed management, irrigation, conservation, and socio-economic development.

Land Tenure and Land Use

4.2.3 With an area of about 125,000 square kilometres and a population of 4 million, Eritrea has an uneven population distribution. The highlands of Eritrea comprise 16% of the total land area, but support more than half of the total rural population. The lowland areas are occupied by pastoral and agro-pastoral communities. The highlands are home to sedentary farmers with crop

production as their main economic activity. They suffer from serious land shortage resulting in overuse and environmental degradation. With a rugged topography in the highland and harsh climatic conditions unsuitable for agriculture in the lowlands, only 23% (MOA) of the land is suitable for rain-fed agriculture.

4.2.4 The land policy directives of the country, captured in **Proclamation 58/1994; Proclamation 95/1997 and Legal Notice 31/1997** state that all land is vested in the state. Therefore legal right to land can only be granted by the government. Government cannot however sell the land or give it in ownership to individuals. Besides state property, the law recognises three types of land rights, namely usufruct on farmlands, meaning agricultural land for use in crop production, housing land in rural areas and leasehold land in either rural or urban areas.

4.2.5 Currently two broad classifications of government land exist. The first is land allotted to Eritrean citizens in lifetime usufruct rights. The second classification is land directly controlled by the Government. This includes the land previously in its hands, the land left over from allocation to citizens, expropriated land and land reserved for different purposes by legislation, e.g., mine and forest reserves, etc. The government may use this type of land for whatever purposes it deems fit, including leasing it to investors. Land held in usufruct can neither be sold nor passed on in inheritance. But the Proclamation allows usufruct land rights to be passed on to children.

4.2.6 Every person, male or female, has a usufruct right to farmland provided s/he is 18 years or above, resident in the area, and dependent on agriculture. These rights allow no form of distinction based on sex, religion or social standing. The village land committee, which must include women, allocates the land by a lottery system. The Government has limited itself only to giving and taking usufruct rights, and it cannot sell land or give it in ownership to individuals. The village still collectively controls its own grazing area, woodlands and roads, and retains its water rights. Unlike many other African countries, no distinction is made between men and women in the provisions of the law for access to domestic housing land, farming land or for industrial use.

4.2.7 Apart from the state ownership of land, there used to be two other types of land tenure the *desa* system and family ownership. In the *desa* system of tenure the villagers collectively own the land surrounding the village. Crop land is redistributed approximately every five to seven years and is strictly divided among farmers by lottery. To ensure equity, the cropland is classified into three grades: good, medium and low quality and everyone who qualifies is allocated a piece of land from each of the three categories. The *desa* system is practiced mostly in the highlands. The family ownership system known as *risti* is where the land is inherited from parents or an ancestor. Two types of *risti* exist, one where the land remains in the family and descendants are only given usufruct rights, and one where the land is continuously subdivided among descendants and their children. Successive Eritrean governments through land reform programmes have converted the *risti* and *tsilmi* systems in many villages to the *desa* system. The *desa* system does not encourage investment in land and also discourages the temporary owners to engage in sound agricultural practices. It must be noted, however, that the recently enacted Land Proclamation has clearly stated that from the date of issuance of the proclamation all previous land tenure systems, regulations, customs are null and void hereafter.

Box 3: Limitations of the Land Proclamation

The Land Proclamation authorizes the allocation of land to widows, divorcees, women over 40 years of age, young unmarried women with national service, single mothers, ex-fighters, internally displaced persons or returnees in FHH. However it has been pointed out that village committees resist allocation of land to such categories of women. Resistance is particularly strong with regard to agricultural land allocation to women. In fact, evidence suggests that men have been the main beneficiaries of the land reform. Married women are subsumed under male household heads to which land is allocated. In case of divorce matrimonial shares can only be obtained via court orders.

Women who are members of land committees are not always gender sensitive and do not always oppose the allocation of land to men only. In the case of married women, the land registration is in the name of the head of household only. In fact even the collection of gender disaggregated data is difficult since a wife's right is subsumed under husband's right. Moreover, there are still some women who are not aware of their land rights and accept that land only belongs to men. The position of women in polygamous marriages also has not been solved since husbands can claim land for one wife only. (W. Zeraï, Un-Habitat 2002, MoLWE)

Crop Production

4.2.8 Crop production in Eritrea is mainly cereal-grains with barley, wheat, and the traditional staple food *taff* grown in the highlands and sorghum and millet grown at lower altitudes. Pulses, mainly chick peas, beans and peas, are grown in the highlands while oilseeds including sesame, cottonseed and groundnut are grown in the lowlands. The main fruit and vegetables grown are banana, papaya, citrus, mango and onion, tomato, peppers, eggplant and okra.

4.2.9 Domestic production of food crops is much lower than the country's food requirements. In the past 10 years domestic cereal production has on average met only 40% of the total cereal requirement of the population, and in some drought years, such as 2002, it reached only 10%. The main reasons for the consistently low agricultural productivity include dependency on rain fed agriculture, low, erratic and uneven distribution of rainfall, poor shallow soils and frequent pests and disease infestation. Lack of modern agricultural practices is another constraint. Inadequate credit facilities, poorly developed markets and weak extension and research services further contribute to the country's shortfall in food production. The border conflict also contributed to a sharp decline in production since the areas which account for 70% of agricultural output are situated in the conflict zone. Lack of male labor due to military service creates another constraint.

4.2.10 Simple farming technologies, such as traditional oxen-drawn, iron-tipped ploughs and wooden tools are still widely used. Traditional rain fed agriculture accounts for more than 90% of the estimated 500,000 ha of cropped land, but improved crop varieties and pesticides are rarely used and it is estimated that only 10% of the farmers use inorganic fertilizers and at considerably lower rates than recommended. Due to deforestation and the resulting shortage of fuel wood, manure is rarely applied on crops as it is primarily used as household fuel for cooking.

Livestock production and Fisheries

4.2.11 Livestock production is a crucial part of the livelihood of rural residents, contributing significantly to their income and food security. It is estimated that Eritrea supports 1.9 million head of cattle, 2.2 million sheep, 4.7 million goats, 0.3 million camels and 1.0 million poultry. Some farmers are also involved in bee-keeping. The most common form of livestock production

is traditional grazing where livestock is not closely associated with crop production. Agropastoral farming where livestock production and arable farming are closely linked is also practiced. The communal grazing land and crop residues, such as those left from threshing of grain, are major sources of feed for the animals. Livestock production is constrained by shortage of feeds and endemic livestock diseases.

4.2.12 Eritrea has over 1,200 kilometres of coastline and a number of islands; fishing is the dominant livelihood of the coastal dwellers and islanders. Only 10% of the fish harvest is consumed in the country, 15% of maximum yield is exploited and the fisheries sector contributes only 4% to GDP. However both the artisanal and industrial fisheries sub-sectors have registered steady growth in the last 16 years with increases in annual catches from 365 tons in 1992 to 7,166 tons in 2004. The main constraints facing the industry include poor transport and storage facilities and lack of quality control. Direct employment in the sector is created by fishing itself, fish processing and fish marketing (wholesale and retail). More than 7,000 registered male fishermen are actively engaged in the artisanal fishing sub-sector. These activities are dominated by men.

Gender Division of labour

4.2.13 Even though both men and women work in agriculture, gendered divisions of labour exists. They depend on regional agrarian system, ethnic affiliation and other socio-economic and cultural factors. In pastoralist and semi-pastoralist areas in the lowlands where livestock breeding is predominant, women's role is centered on processing and preparing food and milking of goats and cows. *Afar* women have the additional task of tending goats. In areas where farming is the mainstay men and women work in the fields and share agricultural work. In addition to this, women are involved in back-yard gardening, poultry and beekeeping and weaving. In keeping with the practice in all regions, women were generally responsible for all aspects of child care.

4.2.14 In the central highlands both men and women work in the fields. However ploughing remains a male preserve, while hoeing and weeding is shared by both men and women. In some areas men and women produce the same crops but in separate fields, either for subsistence or for sale. Separate tasks may also be assigned within the cropping cycle, with men planting cereals and fodder crops together with vegetables, while women only plant some varieties of vegetables. In livestock production men tend the livestock, but women do the milking. They also keep poultry. While in Africa, in general, women perform 70% of the work of food production, this is estimated to average 80% - 90% in Eritrea due to the absence of male labour. Women also provide the labour for 80% of the food storage and transport from farm to the home, 90% of hoeing and weeding, 60% of harvesting and marketing. This would mean that women also work in the fields of their husbands, weeding, hoeing, transporting and storing, while men plough women's field. The distribution of tasks is highly uneven, with most labour being done by women.

4.2.15 While men do all of the actual fishing on boats, women make up 50% of the workforce in beach seining. Indirect employment in the industry is offered by companies which offer support services to the fisheries sector. A significant number of people employed in this sub-sector are women. Women also contribute to the harvesting of fisheries resources, such as catching small pelagic fish, collecting sea snails for the incense and perfume production in Yemen and other Arabic countries¹, net making and mending, fish processing and marketing.

¹ Women collect Conch shells whose lids are dried and exported for incense production in Yemen and the Middle East. Private companies specialize in processing and in export. The snails fetch a high producer price.

Challenges facing women

4.2.16 The border conflict has significantly increased the number of *de facto* female headed households (FHHs) (see chapter 2), resulting in more women being engaged in agricultural activities. The situation has also increased the number of elderly men, women and children involved in farming activities. Many of the FHH face difficulties in cultivating the land because they lack male labor, particularly for ploughing. Women are often forced to hire labor or to rent their fields.

4.2.17 When speaking to both women and men about their daily work/activities, it became very clear that Eritrean women work much longer hours than men - which is corroborated by numerous studies of gender roles and responsibilities in Africa. Women in various areas reported that they commonly work up to 15 hours a day during the cropping season. For whatever season, women work far longer hours than men –in some cases, up to 20 additional hours per week (see annex 3, daily activity profile for men and women). Women ranked shortages of water, fuel wood and food at the top of the list of problems they face, followed closely by lack of access to health care and their tedious workload.

Box 4: Good Practice: Toker Integrated Community Development

The programme was established in 1994 in zoba Maekel and has since expanded to zoba Gash-Barka. Until 2004 Toker was under the umbrella of the MoA and has since registered as a local NGO. The project objective is to assist rural communities in a holistic manner so as to strengthen their capacities to attain household food security and sustain social and economic progress to thus transform their livelihoods. Toker works closely with both community and government institutions, such as Agriculture, Health, Education and Local Government. The project approach combines promotion of modern agriculture including farm inputs and small irrigation system with environmental protection such as terracing, a-forestation, rain-water harvesting and storage, increased animal production and supply of quality veterinary services, clean water supply, gender sensitization, income-generation for women, supply of small credit, promotion of energy saving stoves, improved living quarters, sanitation and health and nutrition information. The project works with project staff living with the target population and acting as promoters and social outreach workers. Government workers are also supported to deliver quality service. Toker villages are exemplary in having adopted fuel efficient stoves, water harvesting and storage, VIP latrines, separation of living spaces for humans and animals, terracing and other measures to prevent land degradation. Residents are aware and engage in both on- and off-farm activities. Toker uses a mixture of incentives and repayable loans.

4.2.18 Men are the chief beneficiaries of agricultural extension services because they are still perceived to be, despite recent legislation, the owners of the land and therefore have more access and contact to extension officers. Illiteracy, lack of transportation and shortage of extension officers generally and female extension officers in particular are amongst the constraints women farmers face. Women farmers also lack access to credit, appropriate technology, agricultural inputs, markets and participation in decision making. Apart from micro-credit given to groups other forms of agricultural finance, such as Credit Unions, do not exist in the country.

4.2.19 The MOA is among the three ministries that established a Gender Focal Point. It is however regrettable that no disaggregated data on women's participation in access to, and uptake of, services are collected; neither is there information on women's access to agricultural inputs, credit, and extension services. In 2000 MOA started the innovative Farmer Advisory Service (FAS), a system that enables local farmers to organize and identify their requirements for

knowledge and skills to improve agricultural production. FAS committees are organized at village level and include women members. At Sub-regional level NUEW holds a seat on FAS committees. Though initiated some years ago the committees are only now slowly forming. The inclusion of NUEW is meant to strengthen the effectiveness of FAS and to ensure that local women participate actively in all activities.

4.2.20 Farmers are selected by FAS committees at village level to participate in integrated farming courses, para-veterinary courses and other farm-related topics. For example, two consecutive courses conducted by MOA failed to attract sufficient women as participants, as only two out of 89 farmers were women (2%). Participation of women in modern agriculture is also very low (5.9%) when compared to men. The most common and dominant agricultural activities of women are animal fattening (18.7%), citrus fruit (18.2%), livestock raising (16.1%) and poultry (42%).

4.2.21 Women in the fisheries sector face similar challenges to their counterparts in the crop and livestock sub-sectors. To address these challenges, the Ministry of Fisheries (MOF) seeks to empower women by establishing credit schemes that enable women to acquire fishing gear, and they also provide training in fish handling/hygiene, in net handling and processing, together with fish and fish product marketing. MOF is also establishing marketing cooperatives that will enable women to market their products with increased professionalism. However much still needs to be done. Women who collect sea snails, for example, experience difficulties in their collection since they lack small boats or canoes and have no credit facilities to buy them.

Recommendations to government

- **Inequality between men and women in accessing agricultural extension services persists. The government needs to make sure that sufficient women extension workers are trained and posted in rural areas. It needs to be ensured that female farmers have access to appropriate technology, improved agricultural implements, seed and crop varieties as well as training in modern farming methods.**
- **Given that many women act as farming household heads, it is important that a 50% quota (at least) be established to make sure that women participate in sufficient numbers in agricultural training courses. FAS committees should make sure that women find the opportunity to attend courses.**
- **The establishment of a credit union structure could be one of the cheapest and most immediate ways to deliver agricultural credit and services in a sustainable manner.**

Recommendations to Government and development partners:

- **Lack of access to agricultural credit and difficulties in accessing markets must be addressed to enhance incomes of the farming communities. Similar help should be extended to the fisheries sector, as the challenges are comparable.**
- **Projects financed in the agricultural sector need to make sure that women, who make up the majority of farmers are proportionately represented among beneficiaries of services and training.**

4.3. Education Sector

Educational spending

4.3.1 Substantial increases in government expenditures on education were made from 1992 to 2005 amounting on average to 5.2% of public spending. This is still low since according to the World Bank 17% of public spending are needed to meet the MDG 2 on primary education. As percent of GDP it increased from 2.7% in 2000 to 5.4% in 2005. The share of basic education

was 42%, that of middle level 10%, secondary 8%, adult education and literacy 3%, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET), Asmara Teacher Training Institute and other schools 17%. Teachers' salaries constitute the largest education expenditure, while investment in quality of teaching and facilities is low.

4.3.2 The Government of Eritrea has been engaged in the construction of schools since independence so as to expand access to educational opportunities for all citizens. However in the past few years construction of new classrooms has slowed down due to problems in the construction industry and other infrastructure projects which are given priorities. This has created crowding and shortages in both urban and rural settings. In 2005/2006 there were 490 pre-schools, 774 elementary schools, 222 middle schools and 64 secondary schools. Overall the number of schools increased by 190% over the last 15 years, resulting in a steep increase in the enrolment of girls especially in the lower levels of the school system. Since 2002 the education system in Eritrea follows a 5-3-4 system: 5 years primary school, 3 years middle school and 4 years high school. Education is free for all levels including technical and vocational training (TVET) and tertiary level institutions. At the basic level, i.e., elementary and middle levels, education is compulsory.

4.3.3 According to the education statistics of 2005/06, the MoE employed 7711 elementary school teachers (44% females), 2491 middle school teachers (13% females) and 1552 secondary school teachers (13% females). Overall female teachers comprise 33% of all teachers. Although the percentage of female teachers is inadequate at all levels, it is more pronounced at the post elementary levels of schooling and in TVET, where female role models are most needed to encourage girls to participate.

Sector policy, strategy and program

4.3.4 The Macro Policy (1994) articulated a vision for the education sector as building an enabling environment in which the standard of living of the people will advance, and human capital is the decisive factor of development. Educational objectives were defined as: (i) the production of a population equipped with the necessary skills, knowledge and culture for a self reliant and modern economy; (ii) the development of self-consciousness and self-motivation in the population to fight poverty, disease, and all the attendant causes of backwardness and ignorance; and (iii) making basic education available to all. The *Concept Paper for a Rapid Transformation of the Eritrean Education System* (2003) identified the major challenges to the vision as being low access to education, insufficient preparation of learners for the labour market and wastefulness of the education system.

Box 5: Challenges of Girl learners

A study on “Girls Education and Other Disadvantaged Children” (2005) identified a number of factors, which inhibit girls’ participation in education. These included:

- **Inadequate supply of elementary, middle and secondary schools** in remote communities. This particularly affects girls who are generally not allowed to travel long distances to continue their education.
- **Long school-home distances** and lack of transportation restrains particularly girls’ participation and young children from remote and isolated villages. This has been identified as one of the major factors for lower participation and drop-out of girls.
- **Parental scepticism** regarding the benefits of girls’ education is a major reason that explains the under-enrolment and early withdrawal of girls, because parents lack positive examples and believe that only future husbands’ benefit from girl’s education, making education of girls seem a bad investment.
- Mismatch between **rigid formal school calendar** and the daily and seasonal realities of child-labour during peak agricultural periods in sedentary and semi-sedentary communities.
- **Lack of role models.** Female students in rural Eritrea live in a predominantly illiterate home environment. A shortage of female teachers can inhibit girls’ school participation and attendance, especially at the middle and secondary education levels, since parents will be worried about their daughters when they approach puberty.
- **Early marriage** is a major cause of the under-enrolment of girls – particularly in remote rural areas. Very few girls continue their education after completing elementary school.
- **Opportunity costs** appear higher for girls than for boys given the preponderance of girls in economic and domestic activities. This includes also the indirect costs such as school uniforms, stationeries and textbooks, transportation and extra tuition.

4.3.5 The **National Education Policy** (NEP) (2003) provides detailed activities to address the identified challenges. It underlines that education is a fundamental human right and a lifelong process by which all individuals are given opportunities to attain their potential. It states that education is to be based on a broad base incorporating widespread dissemination of skills and languages and extensive human capital formation. Furthermore it specifically states that the Government shall work towards the elimination of gender disparities at all levels of the education system. The document unambiguously acknowledges that socio-economic development without the full participation of women is unsustainable and that consequently girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic and secondary education is a major goal. The 2003 five-year **Education Sector Development Programme** focuses on improved access; curriculum, textbooks, quality assurance and school support system; teacher education and development; and capacity building.

4.3.6 The results of a study on the challenges faced by girls to attend schools (see Box 6 above) led to the introduction of three measures to increase participation of girls. These are: (i) monthly *incentive schemes* for girls from poor households and for those attending school away from home including school feeding schemes, take home rations and provision of educational materials and school uniforms; (ii) a **National Communication Strategy Paper** mandated national, regional and local stakeholders to carry out awareness raising and promotional programmes; and (iii) guidelines reserving 30% of places in TVET for girls.

4.3.7 The results of these measures can already be seen. One thousand girls benefited from the UNICEF financed incentive scheme until 2007 and a further 1000 are to benefit from 2008 with World Bank financing. An evaluation of a World Food Programme intervention from 2002-2004, supplying wet rations in primary schools increased enrolment by 18% - 21.9 % for girls and

14.3% for boys. The quota for girls in TVET has led to a 30% increase in girl's enrolment so far. Entry requirements for girls in tertiary education were also lowered to increase enrolment of girls. Access of girl learners has increased tremendously as more and more schools have been built closer to village communities, and boarding schools and hostels have been constructed for girls and disadvantaged children. Resistance by some parents sending their daughters to boarding schools or hostels still continues however.

Early childhood Education

4.3.8 GSE has implemented a five-year Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme from 2001-2005. Children of ages 5 and 6 are enrolled in pre-primary education and the gross enrolment ratio between 1991/92 and 2005/2006 increased by 450.5 percent, from 4.26% to 19.92%. The participation of girls significantly exceeds that of boys, which gives a Gender Disparity Index (GPI) of 1.01 in favour of girls.

Elementary Education

4.3.9 Children of ages 7-11 are enrolled in grades 1-5, and the medium of instruction is the mother tongue of the students. Gross enrolment ratio (GER) for the periods 1991/92 to 2005/2006 rose from 40% to 70% giving a 75% increase. The net enrolment ratio (NER) as compared to the actual number of school age population however is 53%, indicating there are more overage children and backlog in the system. The NER for girls is slightly lower (by 5%) than that of boys, indicating that more overage boys are joining schooling (see Tables 1 and 2 in Annex 5).

4.3.10 On the basis of the GER, the Gender Parity Index (GPI) is very low. The disparity gap for the elementary level has however been widening from 0.85 in 91/2 to 0.80 in 2005/6. In terms of the efficiency of the school system, there is much wastage. Repetition and drop-out rates were very high in 2005/06, where the overall promotion rate was 76.8%, giving a wastage rate of 23%. Interestingly the dropout rate of boys was higher in 2005/6 than that of girls (5.5% for girls against 8.9% for boys).

Middle Level Education

4.3.11 The duration of middle level education is three years (grades 6, 7 and 8). English is the medium of instruction at this level. The appropriate school-age for this level is 12-14. The GER increased by 430% between 1991/92 and 2005/2006 from 20% to 49%. Participation of girls has been increasing over the years, however the gender disparity gap for the Middle Level has been widening continuously from 0.94 in 1991/02 to 0.63 in 2005/06 (compare Tables 3 and 4 in Annex 5). Repetition and dropout rates at this level were also extremely high, and consequently the total *wastage* reached 28.2 percent as of 2005/06. As with primary level the drop-out and repetition rates for boys are higher than those for girls (20.7 and 12.7% for boys respectively against 9.1% and 11.2% for girls). Most of the reasons forwarded for drop-out and repetition at the elementary level also hold true for this level of education even though the tendency for girl learners to continue schooling once they reach the middle level is high.

Secondary Level Education

4.3.12 Female enrolment at secondary level (Grade 9-12) for the academic year 2005/06 constituted 35.2%. Approximately 3.1% of the students in the Secondary level were attending in non-government schools in 2005/06. The GER increased by 77% percent between 1991/92 and 2005/2006 from 13% to 23% (Tables 5 & 6 in the Annex 5). The gap in the GPI has been widening, dropping from 0.93 in 1991/02 to 0.54 in 2005/06. Repetition and dropout rates at this level are also extremely high, giving wastage rate of 34.4%. In the 2005/06 academic year, the

promotion rate was 66%, while the dropout and repetition rate was 17%. Again girls' dropout and repetition rates were almost half those of boys (12.3 and 11.8 percent for girls compared with 20.4 and 11.8 percent for boys respectively). Consequently the promotion rate of girls was 75.9% compared to only 59.5 % for boys.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)

4.3.13 Female learners in TVET represented not more than 12% of total enrolment until 2000/01 when a 30% quota for females was introduced. As a result the enrolment ratio increased to 30% by 2005/06. Additionally, the government has invested in boarding provisions to further enhance enrolment. As in other countries, female learners in TVET have preferences for particular courses of study, such as business and management courses. Technical courses are preferred by males.

Adult education

4.3.14 Adult education and literacy was delivered in small and fragmented projects until 1998, when a national adult education and literacy programme was launched. Parallel programs were also introduced by the Ministry of Defence (MOD). Enrolment jumped from 11,577 in 1998 to 54,446 in 2001 and again to 102,731 in 2006. The clear majority of the participants, excepting courses of MOD, are female learners (see table 9 in Annex 5). Overall, literacy rate in Eritrea reached 57% in 2004.

Tertiary Education

4.3.15 A general paucity of data and information regarding tertiary education in Eritrea has been noted. The University of Asmara (UoA) is reputed to have highly motivated and dedicated academic as well as administrative staff (with over 55 PhD holders, about 10% of them females). Overall the UoA attracts 10% of Eritrea's secondary school leavers of both sexes. Total enrolment increased from 713 in 1999/2000 to 1165 in 2005/06. Enrolment in the various colleges and faculties are characterised by wide gender disparities that fluctuate from year to year. For example in 2006/07 female students constituted only 6% of total enrolment down from 20% in 2003/04. Additionally, in 2006/07, only 5 out of 99 students in the College of Agriculture were female; in Education 4 of 34 students were female; in Law 5 out of 34; and in Health Sciences 2 out of 26 students. Over 80% of the female students are from urban Asmara.

Regional disparities in Education

4.3.16 Great Regional disparities in access to education and enrolment exist at all levels of the education system. Generally Northern and Southern Red Sea regions are the most disadvantaged, with deviations from national averages as high as 35.6%. With regard to secondary education, Gash Barka is equally disadvantaged.

4.3.17 Some important strategies support the education for all policy. For example, the MOE has a gender disaggregated database, and curriculum and text books are becoming more gender-sensitive. The ministry has also prepared **The National Gender Policy in Education and Strategic Framework of Action**, with implementation in the initial stage and gender mainstreaming not fully implemented yet.

4.3.18 The education sector faces challenges with regard to achieving gender parity at all levels. Girls face greater constraints than boys to enter and stay in school, and they also face negative attitudes of their families, communities, peers and teachers. However the high drop-out and repetition rates of boys, particularly at secondary level, are not sufficiently explained and also should be reason for concern. Some reasons for drop-out mentioned by various stakeholders in the Curriculum Review of 2002 might, in fact, affect boys rather than girls. Mandatory

registration with the national service, pastoral/nomadic lifestyle, lack of interest/ seriousness and a mismatch between curriculum and student ability might be some of the reasons that impede boys more than girls in completing school.

4.3.19 The provision of basic education for nomadic and pastoralist communities has related concerns. Currently students, both boys and girls, in such communities are made to attend schooling by accommodating them in boarding or hostel facilities, which cannot be sustained due to high unit costs. Other options need to be sought in order to create access to education for nomadic communities.

4.3.20 With the assistance of its development partners, the MOE has piloted initiatives that are aimed at improving the school environment for girls. These include the building of centres of excellence in selected disadvantaged areas, such as in Southern Red Sea. The holistic package of interventions seeks to make schools more gender responsive. The MOE has also established different clubs in schools with the aim to get girls involved in the running of the clubs and to encourage them to address specific issues affecting them (health clubs, behavioural change and communication peer groups, science clubs, etc.). It is important that this initiative be continued and replicated. Initiatives should also target boys aiming to increase their motivation. The major challenge in adult education is increasing enrolment of men and out of school youth.

4.3.21 Although statistical data indicate that girls' participation in the formal schooling system still trails that of boys, girls' enrolment has between 1991/92 to 2005/06 increased by more than three fold. The high participation of women in literacy programmes is also very encouraging. The initiatives of the ministry in mainstreaming gender in all interventions promises to increase the access for girls and boys.

Recommendations to government and development partners:

- **Expansion and improvement of classrooms, boarding facilities, water and sanitation facilities to create gender responsive environments, particularly in marginalised nomadic communities where girls' enrolment is still low are very important.**
- **Advocacy programmes for girls' education through community mobilization campaigns, the media, role models and community sensitization on negative cultural practices need to be maintained and expanded. More needs to be done about the provision of basic services such as guidance and counselling of female students.**
- **The provision of basic education for nomadic and pastoralist communities in boarding schools is too costly to be sustained. Other options, such as mobile schools, need to be explored in order to create access to education for nomadic communities and particularly for girls.**
- **The establishment of clubs in schools with the aim to get girls to lead the clubs and to encourage them to address issues affecting them is important and needs to be continued and replicated.**
- **There is evidence that a larger percentage of boys drop out of school, particularly in secondary school where the percentage is double that of girls. The reason for the high drop-out rate of boys should be investigated and measures be put in place to address shortcomings. What is needed are also clubs that appeal to boys and encourage them to perform better and remain in school.**
- **Men need to be encouraged to join adult education. Special courses for men that are adapted to the needs and interests of older men and out of school male youth should be put in place.**

4.4 Health Sector

Health Sector Financing

4.4.1 The share of the health sector of the total GDP is estimated to have remained at 3.5% for the period 2000 to 2005. For the same period budgetary allocation to the health sector nonetheless increased by 5%. When the yearly budget of the Ministry of Health (MOH) is analysed by sub-sectors, more than half (56.2%) went to hospitals, and only 18% to health centres and health stations. To the extent that hospitals focus on curative health and health centres and stations on preventive and promotional aspects of health care, it could be concluded that curative health plays a very significant role in Eritrea's health system.

4.4.2 A nominal fee is paid for registration, admission, drug supplies, radiology, and laboratory services in health facilities. However patients with exemption papers from local governments are treated at no cost. The major portion of user fees is generated by the National Referral Hospital. Although the amount of user fees collected is increasing yearly, it is estimated that they account for only 10% of the MOH's total recurrent budget.

Health Policy and Strategy

4.4.3 The Government of Eritrea has formulated a **Health Sector Policy (2005)**, which emphasises equitable provision of basic health services to all people. Priority is given to the control of infectious diseases, especially HIV/AIDS/STI, TB and Malaria, as well as the reduction of maternal mortality. The Health Policy also focuses on the improvement of the quality of health services through increased availability and accessibility of human and non-human resources. The Government had also implemented a **Strategic Plan for HIV/AIDS/STI (1997-2002)**, with a second phase for 2003-2007, and the third phase from 2008 to 2012. The MOH has identified the reduction of maternal mortality as the utmost reproductive health priority in Eritrea. The commitment was underlined at the conference on the **Road Map Accelerating Maternal and Newborn Health** held in Asmara in October 2007, which discussed strategic directions for improving maternal and newborn health and outlined a 'road map' for achieving the objectives.

4.4.4 The **Reproductive Health Strategy (2008-2012)** intends to scale-up a set of critical result-based interventions which aim to reduce maternal and neo-natal mortality and improve adolescent reproductive health. These include: (i) improving the quality and coverage of ante-natal care (ANC); (ii) expanding access to skilled birth attendance and emergency obstetric care (EmOC); (iii) introducing maternal death audits; (iv) promoting child spacing to improve maternal health and survival; (v) increasing access to Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT); (vi) ensuring blood safety and availability for EmOC; (vii) increasing adolescents' access to appropriate, youth-friendly RH information and services; and (viii) reducing harmful traditional practices such as FGM, early marriage and inappropriate feeding. The key approaches are: to integrate RH with other HIV/AIDS, Malaria, and TB Control (HAMSET) diseases; strengthen community level interventions to increase awareness of RH risks and danger signs; promote good RH practices; mobilise communities for care, support, referrals and maternal audits; and promote inter-sectoral activities. In terms of human resources outputs, the plan targets to produce 200 nurse midwives, 200 public health technicians and 200 laboratory technicians, and to increase the percentage of health stations with at least one nurse from 28% to 50% by 2012.

4.4.5 The **Adolescent Health Policy (2004)** gives further consideration to basic RH issues such as general health problems affecting adolescents, especially infectious diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, dental and oral conditions, visual problems, nutritional deficiencies, trauma and accidents, and physical and mental disabilities. The implementation arrangement prescribes that a multi-sectoral approach will be followed.

4.4.6 In 2005, MOH has also prepared **The National Gender Policy in Health and Strategic Framework of Action**. A gender focal person was appointed to ensure that gender equality concerns are incorporated in the sector plan and to follow-up implementation. However the plan does not specify measurable targets and is not time bound. It is also not backed by a detailed action plan to be implemented by main departments of the MOH or the regions. To date neither the Health Management Information System (which, among other things, generates the Annual Health Services Activity Report (AHSAR)) nor are the sub-sector plans disaggregated by gender.

Access to Health Facilities

4.4.7 In 1991 Eritrea had 16 hospitals (HO), 4 health centres (HC) and 106 Health Stations (HS). In 2006 the number of hospitals had increased by 56%, health centres by 1200%, health stations by 70% and total health facilities by 20%. On average, there is one health facility per 10,000 people with the exception of *zoba* DKB. According to the MOH's current standard, a HS has to serve about 10,000, a HC and/or a *zoba* hospital (mini-hospital) 50,000 and a *zoba* referral hospital 200,000 persons. Therefore, 17 HOs, 67 HCs and 337 HSs will be needed to reach national standards.

Regional Disparities in the Provision of Health Services

4.4.8 Regional variations in access to health services are significant. Women living in the highlands, and especially in the cities, are more likely to visit health facilities, have their children vaccinated and send them to school than those living elsewhere. A higher proportion of women living in Asmara receives antenatal care and gives birth at hospitals; and a higher number of children are monitored for growth and attend school than elsewhere. As a result maternal mortality and child malnutrition are lower in Asmara than in other places. In addition 40% of health professionals were assigned to *zoba* Ma'ekel in 2006.

Human Resources

4.4.9 Health data in general and data for health professional staff in particular are not disaggregated by gender, but it is known that women are a minority among doctors and medical technicians. Doctor to population ratio has decreased from 1:37,500 in 1991 to 1:16,000 in 2006. During the same period, the nurse/population ratio decreased from 1:19,500 to 1: 2,845. The number of health professionals that graduated from the College of Nursing and Health Technology of the MOH increased more than sevenfold from 63 in 1993 to 469 in 2006. According to MOH standard all health centers and health stations are staffed by nurses and associate nurses.

Reproductive and Maternal and Child Health Care (MCH)

4.4.10 The MMR in Eritrea was estimated to be 1,400/100,000 live births in 1990, a year before Eritrea's liberation. In 1995 the MMR dropped down to 998/100,000 live births (EDHS); it further dropped down to 750/100,000 live births in 2005 (Mismay G), and 450/100,000 live births in 2005 (WHO, UNICEF, UNIFPA, and WB estimates). There are significant regional variations however: from 46/100,000 in *zoba* Ma'ekel to 1,261/100,000 in *Zoba* South Red Sea. Three of the six *zobas* (Anseba, Gash Barka and Southern Red Sea) had MMR above

1,000/100,000 live births. Forty eight percent (48%) of maternal death occurred during delivery and 36% after. Direct causes of maternal mortality in Eritrea are similar to elsewhere in Africa, including unsafe abortion, haemorrhage, sepsis, obstructed labour and eclampsia. The neonatal mortality ratio indicates that it has a decreasing trend with mean of 49/1000 in the last 8 years.

4.4.11 Reasons for the low status of MCH include a lack of knowledge of risks and illnesses, poor access to RH/MCH services, poor nutrition, harmful traditional practices and low levels of education and socio-economic status of women. According to the EDHS of 2002 72% of women reported at least one constraint to seeking antenatal care. Furthermore only 65% of the 370 health facilities provided ANC services to pregnant women in 2006 with little change since 1999. Cost, distance and lack of transport are by far the most common reasons given for not using facilities. Coverage of services varies between regions, with DKB having the lowest coverage (42%), and Gash Barka the highest (84.5%). HOs delivered only 14% of ANC services. Only 18.7% of pregnant women registered for ANC services in their first, 53.3% in the second and 22% in the third trimester in 2006. The high drop out in the third trimester is said to be caused by lack of transport.

4.4.12 Use of professional health care during child birth is one of the process indicators to assess progress towards the improvement of maternal health. In order to bring about a decline in the maternal and neonatal mortality ratio the MOH has trained and deployed 1,308 nurse midwives between 1992 and 2006. Furthermore 714 health workers were trained on life saving skills related to EmOC between 2003 and 2006. However two thirds of all women in Eritrea deliver outside health facilities attended by trained traditional birth attendants (TBAs). Although the number of deliveries attended by professional health workers increased slightly between 2005 and 2006, the delivery service coverage rate has actually declined by 2.8%. Only 26% of all women who delivered in 2006 were assisted by a health professional.

4.4.13 EmOC is critical in reducing maternal and neonatal mortality and disability, even though proportion of women who require EmOC is estimated to be only 15% of all total pregnancies, the major cause of complication being unsafe abortions (47.5% of all EmOC cases in 2006). Surprisingly while 70% of pregnant women had at least one ante-natal care visit, only 28% were delivered by a skilled birth attendant in 2002. This might be related to the lack of quality of care, with health personnel not friendly and not well trained. In the low lands where infibulations (see chapter 5.4) are common, women do not favour facility-based births because nurses refuse to re-stitch infibulations after birth. TBAs on the other hand do this as part of the birthing service. Moreover first babies in particular should be born in the home of the mother of the pregnant women, and a study in 2003 revealed that older female relatives or neighbours delayed seeking medical help from 1 to 5 days after complications began.

4.4.14 In order to increase facility based births MoH has established 15 Maternity Waiting Homes near HS, where women can stay for up to 2 to 4 weeks before the expected delivery. The measure has shown to increase user rates. The ministry has also put in place maternal health promoters and peer educators to change the perceptions of communities about the services offered. TBAs also have been trained to identify complications and have been told to refer such patients, but it is not clear if they actually do so in every instance since this means a decline in income. TBAs should be made accountable for their referrals, for instance through a system of fines or incentives.

4.4.15 Family planning (FP) contributes to fertility decline and in the reduction of unwanted pregnancies and thereby improves healthy reproductive behaviour. In general contraceptive use remains low in Eritrea; there has been no increase since 1995. Urban women are almost five times as likely to use a method of contraception as are rural women. Not surprisingly, current use is highest in Asmara with nearly one in four currently married women reporting use of a modern method. As expected use of contraceptives increases with level of education, from 4% of women with no education to 11% among women with primary education, and 17% among those with middle education to 22% among women with some secondary education.

4.4.16 In spite of cultural norms favouring early marriage and child bearing, the marriage age is relatively high. Sixty-nine percent of girls aged between 15 and 19 years are single. Moreover only 18% of girls aged between 15 and 19 years have a child or are pregnant. The mean age for first sexual initiation is 15 years for girls. Fertility levels are negatively correlated with educational attainment, ranging from 5.5 in women with no education to 3.1 among women with basic secondary education.

4.4.17 Obstetric fistula is a significant health problem in Eritrea. A number of factors contribute to the occurrence of obstetric fistula including early childbearing and lack of skilled attendant during labour and delivery. Female genital mutilation also contributes indirectly to fistula through obstructed and prolonged labour. A 2003 study supported by the MOH and UNFPA found that fistula patients were 20 years old or younger when the fistula occurred. In 2002 only three Eritrean doctors had the capacity to treat minor fistula. UNFPA funded in-service training to health care providers on a number of issues, including prevention of fistula from 2004. Doctors were trained in fistula repair and a dedicated fistula hospital was opened in Mendefera (*zoba* Debub). Treatment at the hospital is holistic and provides patients with treatment, sensitization on FP and RH, and social reintegration assistance including training and supply of credit for income generation. A hostel for fistula patients is planned in the compound of the Mendefera hospital to facilitate counselling and re-integration of patients. Satellite centres have also been opened and 500 fistula cases have been repaired.

Malaria

4.4.18 Malaria accounted for 1.4% of all deaths for U5 children in 2006. The death due to malaria and the case fatality rate for pregnant women due to malaria is not known. There were 366 reported cases of malaria in pregnant women in 2006, accounting for only 1.5% of total cases. Gash Barka has the highest rate of incidence of Malaria (76% of reported cases nationally).

Recommendations to government:

- **In order to save resources and energy, promoters should be pooled and deliver more than one message in an integrated manner.**
- **The establishment of Maternity Waiting Homes should be extended to cover the whole country.**
- **The use of trained TBAs can also have negative effects if TBAs are not referring women with complications. TBAs should not just be trained to identify pregnancies at risk but be presented with incentives for referring them. Malawi has tried out accountability mechanisms with TBAs.**
- **The Behavioural Change and Communication programs implemented by the MOH and its partners should go to scale and be replicated nationwide.**
- **Fistula repair services need to be extended from the dedicated Mendefera Hospital to other areas through establishment of satellite clinics.**

Recommendations to government and development partners:

- **Maternal health promotion needs to be addressed in a holistic and culturally sensitive manner. The successes of the NUEW-led campaign against FGM could here serve as a model of best practice for the government and development partners.**
- **MCH/ANC clinics need to be youth friendly in order to increase utilization among young people.**
- **Family planning needs to be urgently stepped up and delivered in an environment that is conducive to success. Offering services as part of the U5 services might be one way to increase use. Men also need to be involved in campaigns and be persuaded that child spacing is going to benefit the welfare of the whole family.**
- **Intensive sensitisation and promotional campaigns need to be undertaken in order to raise community knowledge and attitude about the danger signs of pregnancy, delivery and post-natal as well as neonatal risks. Communities need to play a supportive role in emergency preparedness and readiness. The empowerment of women in making decisions regarding utilization of health services during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum needs to be increased.**

4.5 Infrastructure Sector

Energy

4.5.1 Overall access to electricity in Eritrea is among the lowest in the world: only 32% of the population has access to electricity (78% in urban compared to 3% in rural areas). The Eritrean Electricity Corporation, a state owned enterprise, is the sole public power utility provider in the country. Within the household economy 90% of energy consumed is used for cooking purposes, while the remaining 10% is used for lighting and other purposes. According to Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) the average monthly household expenditure for energy is approximately 14% of disposable income. Household energy needs are primarily dependent on biomass (dung, agricultural residue, wood and charcoal) and accounts for 79.7% of total consumption. However electricity contributed only 1.7% of total household energy consumption.

4.5.2 Traditionally women have the responsibility of providing energy for domestic use and they have to travel long distances to find fuel wood. Sixty percent of the total fuel wood used is collected by women, 29% by men and the rest (11%) by children, relatives and friends. The national average distance covered to collect fuel wood is 9 km per week. But this figure varies widely, from 0.5 km in the urban areas to up to 45 km in rural areas, such as in Gash Barka region. Fuel wood collection is undertaken on foot (60%), with donkeys (26%), camels (10%) and carts (3%).

4.5.3 To address some of the needs arising from the fuel wood crisis, the government established an *Energy Research and Training Centre* to research and develop renewable energy resources and technologies (RETs). The Centre also trains technicians to promote, install and maintain smokeless energy saving cooking-stoves (*mogogo*). *Mogogo* stoves are built from local materials and women are trained to construct the stoves themselves. The *mogogo* stove has many benefits: energy efficiency is increased from 7% to 25% and drudgery of wood collection and consumption is decreased by up to 50%. The stoves also help decrease deforestation and reduce the emission of green house gases. In addition the stove is smoke free, thus eliminating the negative effects of smoke inhalation and allowing women to socialize while cooking. The stove is also said to be well adjusted to local staple food preparation, it saves cooking time and is easy

to use. The introduction of the stove has created jobs for both male and female artisans. Over 51,000 stoves have been installed and more than 12,000 new installations were planned for 2008. The design of the stove has won four awards for innovation in energy conservation.

Water and Sanitation

4.5.4 Eritrea is classified as water stressed country, with low ground water supplies due to low infiltration rates. This means that hand dug wells easily dry up. Success in borehole drilling is as low as 10% overall and 40% to 70% in river beds. Rural water supply relies on human and animal powered water abstraction and delivery methods with few mechanized systems. Surveys suggest that 51.6% of villages are supplied from unprotected sources. Simple, cheap and purpose designed water filtration systems are not yet used in Eritrea.

4.5.5 The burden of providing water for domestic use falls mainly on women and children, carrying it on their heads or backs. In areas where there are no systems, people travel between 3-6 kilometers to fetch water. Median time to travel to a water source is one hour, with an additional one hour of waiting at the source. During the dry season and in drought years, shallow wells in dry river beds supply water. Some rural communities with assistance from the government, NGOs, NUEW and Toker, have developed rural water and sanitation projects and engage in water harvesting and conservation. NUEW's donkey/water project, which is supported by a German NGO, is notable in combining improved access to water with income generation.

Box 6: Best Practice: The NUEW Donkey/Water Project

Carrying water in canisters, buckets or calabashes ruins women's and girl's health and in many cases still does not meet the family needs. Carrying water on a donkey means that more water can be carried with fewer health risks; surplus water can be sold or used for businesses and irrigation of vegetable plots. The donkey/water project was started in 1996 by NUEW with funding from a German NGO. It relies on the gift of a donkey and an 80 litre rubber water container suitable for carrying on the back of the donkey. The objective of the project is to assist single women to enter the small business sector using part of the water collected to sell whilst allowing them to relieve the children of the water carrying chore and attend school.

The village elders and NUEW select the beneficiaries according to agreed upon criteria including the desire to send a daughter to school. The project has been active in 4 regions, and has distributed 7904 donkeys so far. Donkeys are now also donated to midwives to serve as "taxis". The project has had impressive results with women managing to move out of poverty. This project has also started to question gender roles, since the donkey/water carrying technology is interesting enough to encourage boys to also fetch water.

4.5.6 Water harvesting is another means of addressing the chronic water shortage. Water harvesting projects conducted by the government and, to a certain extent, Toker as well, assist rural communities to collect water and encourages the storage of rain water in reservoirs near or under homes. Water can be stored for up to eight months. This conservation of water helps rural communities to conduct income generating activities within their homes and promotes hygiene and sanitation. It also frees children to attend school. Dew water harvesting has also been piloted by one NGO.

Sanitation

4.5.7 The availability of individual or communal lavatories is extremely low. In 2006 the sanitation coverage was only 1.3% in rural areas and it is assumed to be fairly low in urban areas too, though reliable data are not available. By far the most common forms of sanitation are

simple and improved pit latrines. Preference lies, however, with “bush toilets”, since in rural communities, pit latrines are perceived to be expensive, liable to collapse and culturally unacceptable. Women also explained that going to the toilet in the bush (normally with other women friends) is the only time they can chat without their husbands prying. As a result of poor sanitation almost 90% of families consume water contaminated by faeces, leading to increases in incidence of water borne and water- related diseases.

4.5.8 The *Water Policy* (2007) prioritizes domestic water supply and promotes the full involvement of women and the poor in the planning, decision-making, management and maintenance of domestic water supply installations. The **Water Resources Proclamation** states that *Regional Water Resources Boards* need to have an unspecified number of women members, while the *sub-zoba Water Resources Committees* must have at least 3 women members. *Village Water Resources Committees* should be composed of 8 representatives, three of whom should be women in addition to a representative of NUEW who shall be the chairperson of the committee. This effectively means that *all village water committees are chaired by women!* The proclamation also ensures adequate and sufficient water provision for female-headed households who might not have the means to pay for water. In addition the proclamation makes recommendations that affirmative action backed by budgets should be employed to ensure women’s participation in the water sector.

Box 7: Vision of the Water Policy (2007)

The Mission of the Water Policy is to identify and develop the water resource base, protect the resource from natural and human induced risks, promote equitable sharing of the resource by all the citizens and implement an inclusive and participatory management system. Management will be based on efficient and sustainable use of resources. Therefore, it is intended that by the year 2025 Eritrea will enjoy fully the benefits of gender inclusive “integrated planning” at national and sub national levels, so that water, land and other resources will be equitably and efficiently utilized to achieve and maintain national and sector goals for sustainable development in the interest of society as a whole now and thereby benefit future generations.

Transport and communications

4.5.9 Eritrea’s transportation network was severely damaged during Eritrea’s war for independence and during the border conflict. Since independence the government has given high priority to the rehabilitation of its transport infrastructure, in particular its road network. Despite these efforts the road network does not effectively serve many parts of the country. Eritrea has a total road network of 14,901 kilometers of which only 8.53% are paved, 25.41% are gravel and 66.06% are earth roads. As a result vehicle operating costs are high and access to motorised transport is low, particularly in the rainy season. The poorly developed road sector seriously affects the lives of the poor, since the very low road density coupled with rising fuel prices has exacerbated an already underprovided transport situation. This has negative impacts on access to services and facilities such as clinics, hospitals, markets, employment and social centres.

4.5.10 The key issues relating to **gender and transport** are the unequal distribution of the transport burden between men and women; unequal access to transport technologies; and the ‘invisibility’ of women’s transport needs in transport planning. In Africa, women are the main domestic carriers but most means of transport are owned and used by men. Women have less access to information, capital, credit or cash incomes to enable them to invest in, and manage,

profitable transport activities. Rural women spend 15-30 hours a week on domestic transport activities, much more than men. According to a Village Level Transport and Travel Study, “domestic fuel, water and food account for 73% of the trips, 61% of the travel time and 93% of the transport effort” undertaken by women. The already mentioned donkey/water project run by NUEW (see Box 6 above) helps to meet rural women’s transport needs but needs to be extended to assist more women.

Media and telecommunications

4.5.11 Both the media and telecommunications are government controlled. One television channel and two AM radio stations are run by the Ministry of Information. The Ministry considers it as its mandate to use the media for the dissemination of information regarding gender equality and weekly broadcasts address currently pertinent issues. In addition special programs and talk shows are devoted to gender equality. Themes such as female genital mutilation, prevention of fistula, women’s rights and family life are subjects of such programmes, which are very popular among viewers/listeners. Gender sensitive soap operas which address prejudices and encourage behaviour change are also screened. A number of Eritrean journalists are known to support gender equality goals in the media, but the Ministry is largely relying on NUEW for gender expertise.

4.5.12 Eritrea faces serious challenges with regard to its infrastructure. Access to water and sanitation is very low resulting in serious impacts on health, particularly in rural areas. Electricity coverage is also very low, causing pressure on the environment through use of non-renewable energy, causing further environmental degradation (see below). The road network and transport infrastructure is inadequate, and access to IT and telecommunication is difficult. These aspects, if not addressed, have negative impacts on economic growth, restrict the economic empowerment of large sections of the population and have negative impacts on poverty reduction and socio-economic development.

Recommendations to government:

- **Apart from the WRD other infrastructure sector ministries are not gender aware and have no gender sensitive/mainstreamed policies or programmes. Gender Focal Points need to be appointed and funds made available for their activities. Infrastructure ministries and departments must be encouraged to follow WRD’s example and ensure that women participate in infrastructure planning and management.**
- **With only 1.3% average sanitation coverage in rural Eritrea the use of latrines needs to be stepped up. The Government could convince villagers of the benefits of ecological toilets, which are environmentally friendly and more pleasant to use, with a suitable publicity campaign using women as ‘promoters’. Promoters should also address behaviour change within families. The NGO Toker for example has extensive experience in the promotion of sanitation.**

Recommendations to government and development partners

- **The establishment of the Energy Research and Training Centre (ERTC), which researches and develops renewable energy resources and technologies (RETs), is a valuable innovation that should be expanded to cover the whole country. In addition to ERTC, which promotes improved stoves, NGO’s and other groups promoting *mogogo* stoves should be supported technically and financially to increase their outreach capacity.**
- **Because of the great lacunae in addressing infrastructure and gender equality in an equitable manner, all infrastructure investment programmes need to involve gender experts and activities should be based on an analysis of the needs of men and women.**

5. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

5.1 Environment

Environmental degradation and deforestation

5.1.1 Climatic conditions in Eritrea are harsh; it is a country with contrasting topography of high lands reaching 3,010 meters at its peak in Emba Soira, southeast of Asmara, with an arid lowland strip along the Red Sea, and at the lowest point, the Danakil Depression drops to 130 meters below sea level. The average temperature in Asmara is 16° C, whereas in Massawa, a coastal town, it is 30°C with peaks of 50°C. Average rainfall in Asmara is 508 millimeters per year, in Massawa it is only 205 millimeters. The Denakil Depression is said to be one of the hottest places on earth. The country has only one perennial river, the Setit; all other rivers are seasonal. While 30% of the country was covered by forests a century ago, the forest cover is estimated to be less than 1% today.

5.1.2 The environmental challenges faced by the country include continued deforestation and high consumption of fuel wood for domestic energy, building of traditional wooden houses and over-grazing that causes land degradation. The concentration of the country's vast livestock population in the uplands and western lowlands has led to the loss of vegetation and is a major cause of land degradation. Agricultural expansion in arid lands and along river banks is a major cause of the degradation of forests/woodlands. From June to September harsh winds with sandy particles blow across the Red Sea toward the eastern lowlands, resulting in the expansion of the sandy desert causing deforestation and desertification.

5.1.3 Over-exploitation of natural forests (woodlands) for domestic fuel wood, fencing and construction is common. Woody biomass is used as the main source of energy in most parts of the country. The construction of traditional houses, each of which is reputedly built with an estimated 100 felled trees, has also contributed significantly to deforestation and environmental degradation. The indiscriminate deforestation has resulted in excessive soil erosion and land degradation in the highlands, with an estimated 15-30 tonnes/hectare of soil removed by erosion each year. The use of cow dung and crop residue as fuel deprives the soil of its sources of organic nutrients, depresses productivity, and impacts negatively on the food security of the country. The traditional land tenure system (*desa*), which allows for periodic redistribution of land every 5-8 years, provides no incentive for farmers to invest in long term improvements in land, such as tree planting, agro-forestry, well digging or in soil conservation. In addition cropland is open to communal grazing in the post-harvest season, which results in the removal of crop residues and exposes the land to wind erosion.

Gender and environment

5.1.4 Gender and the environment are intrinsically linked. Increased deforestation leads to soil erosion, reducing agricultural productivity, contributes to decreased water availability and increases the burden of women. Women spend less time on productive activities as they spend more time looking for water and fuel wood. Under certain circumstances women may be forced to cut the very trees that provide forestry products important for survival. Women's traditional knowledge of natural resources is crucial. Daily contact with the environment engenders with a special relationship and knowledge of traditional plants, herbs and forest products. Despite the fact that ownership and decision-making related to land is still identified with men, women greatly participate in land conservation, contributing to the success of these projects.

Environmental Management

5.1.5 The **National Environmental Management Plan (NEP) (1995)** is the blueprint for the protection of the scarce environmental resources. The plan introduces the establishment of protected areas and the rehabilitation of degraded environment, promotes people's participation in planning processes and the management of the natural resources, supports the new ethic of sustainable living, stresses the need to maintain the diversity of environmental systems and promotes the development of integrated management strategies that allow for the multiple use of natural resources.

5.1.6 NEP also recognises the importance of women in environmental management and aims to ensure that women's participation in environmental protection is enhanced. It recommends the establishment of a unit to deal with gender and environment issues within NUEW. It also calls for the mobilization of women for environmental protection activities, including awareness on negative farming methods that lead to degradation. Implementation of NEP recommendations has however been limited due to lack of management capacity, trained manpower and financial resources. Moreover many examples show that implementation of policies tend to lack local understanding due to reluctance to change the 'custom and practices' of the rural communities. With regard to the involvement of women in natural resource management, NUEW has not been able to put in place environmental projects due to financial and capacity constraints.

Recommendations to government:

- **The government needs to establish a unit for gender and the environment/climate change in concerned ministries. NUEW needs to mobilise women and men for environmental protection activities and organise training and awareness campaigns.**
- **As environmental degradation has a negative impact on the availability of energy, water and other natural resources, which in turn impacts on health, a multi sector approach to addressing environment degradation and management is needed. The Ministries of Agriculture, Energy and Mines, Land, Water and Environment, Health and Education should, together with NUEW, design a common, coordinated and inter-linked strategy, which builds on the comparative advantage of each sector.**

Recommendation to development partners:

- **All investment interventions need to carefully assess environmental and social implications and should contain activities that seek to reverse environmental degradation.**

5.2 HIV/AIDS

5.2.1 Compared to other SSA countries, the prevalence of HIV in Eritrea remains relatively low and the trend is downwards. The HIV prevalence rate in women who visited ANC was 4.2% in 1999 and had fallen to 1.33% in 2005. However the prevalence of syphilis among women who visit ANC was 1.3% in 2003, increased to 2.4% in 2005, and dropped to 1.10 % in 2007. HIV prevalence among ANC users was 3.3% in urban areas against 0.9% in rural areas. Unmarried women age 15-24 constitute one of the more vulnerable groups since their infection rate was 7.5%. Whilst these figures are still reassuring it is necessary to note that they only refer to those women that attend ANC.

5.2.2 The HIV infection rate is very high in certain areas and populations and in women of different socio-economic background. A 2006 report found that:

- there is a substantial variation between urban (3.4%) and rural (0.9%) prevalence rates;
- the prevalence rate is higher among single women (7.2%) when compared to married ones;

- there is a marked variation between age groups of women; for example: 1.3% for age group 15-19, 3.8% for 20-24, 2.5% for 30-34;
- the prevalence is high among secondary school completers (4.0%) and as low as 0.9% among illiterate women; and
- in women who work in bars, hotels and restaurants infection rates reach 8.6%.

5.2.3 In the last four years, Eritrea has initiated an excellent peer-led Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) program for HIV/AIDS as well as a successful condom promotion and distribution initiative. Blood safety has greatly improved with 100% of blood units now screened for HIV.

5.2.4 The 2002 EDHS and subsequent empirical studies reveal that the general awareness of HIV/AIDS among the population is nearly universal, whilst it is reported that 96% of women claim to have heard of AIDS. Fewer but still a large proportion (88%) believe that infection can be avoided, though women living in rural areas are less likely to believe that fact. The understanding of HIV/AIDS prevention is strongly related to education but the higher the level of education the less the perceived risk. These facts point to the need to carefully target HIV/AIDS education to the defined vulnerable groups, and to the fact that the threat of a more generalized epidemic in urban areas still exists.

5.2.5 Condom use is has been steadily increasing in Eritrea. According to latest reports of MOH, condom use in the country has reached 6 million per annum. However amongst commercial sex workers in urban areas, condom use reached almost 100%. Since 2003 social marketing programmes have reported an increase in condom use.

Recommendations to government and development partners:

- **In order to avoid a full-scale epidemic, the country needs to intensify its efforts to prevent infection in vulnerable groups and transmission between vulnerable groups and the general population.**
- **Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) and Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) need to be scaled up, especially outside the main administrative and commercial urban areas. Management of STIs also needs strengthening.**
- **NUEW should spare no efforts in ensuring that women's issues in HIV/AIDS are mainstreamed in all sector ministries.**

5.3 Empowerment, Leadership and Decision Making

5.3.1 Like all patriarchal societies, a lower status is accorded to women in Eritrea than to men in family matters and domestic, local and national decision making. Men's control over women is reinforced by religious, cultural and traditional practices strongly enshrined in customary laws and cultural practices. There are certain myths and proverbs that play a major part in shaping the stereotyped roles and images of women, such as the proverb: *'As a donkey has no horns, women have no hearts'* meaning that women have no wisdom and no sense of judgment. This perpetuates the notion that men are superior to women and continues to encourage male members of a family to assume the role of decision-makers.

5.3.2 Article 7.4 of the constitution affirms that all Eritreans, without distinction, are guaranteed equal opportunity to participate in any position of leadership in the country. However women's representation in high office is still low despite affirmative action measures. These

include a legislated quota reserving 30% of seats for women in Provincial and District Assemblies and National Parliament. Affirmative action regulations also exist stipulating the minimum number of women in community courts and other local level decision-making bodies, such as village land committees.

Table 1: Women in Politics and Leadership

No	Government post	1998			2002			2007		
		No. of women	Total	% of women	No. of women	Total	% of women	No. of women	Total	% of women
1	National Assembly	33	150	22%	33	150	22%	33	150	22%
2	Ministers	2	13	13.3%	3	17	17.6%	3	18	16.6%
3	Director Generals	1	4	20.0%	DNA	DNA	DNA	2	5	40%
4	Directors	1			9	115	7.82%	2	9	22.2%
5	Regional Governor	0	10	0%	0	6	0%			
6	Sub. Regional Gov.	2	51	3%	3	53	5.7%			
7	Dep. Regional Gov.	1	47	2%	4	49	8.2%			
8	Dist. Administrator	8	11	68%	3	13	23%			
9	Dep. Dist. Admstr.	-	-	-	6	7	85.7%			

Source: MoL, MoJ and MoFA, taken from CEDAW 2004

5.3.3 Women currently make up 22% of the National Assembly members and out of the 18 government ministers, 3 are women (16.6%). In the six Regional Assemblies, women occupy seats as follows: Zoba Maekel 37%; Zoba Debub 30%; Zoba Anseba 28%; Zoba Gash-Barka 29.7%; Southern Red Sea 27%; and 29.5% in Northern Red Sea. Of all leadership and decision making positions, only the representation of women in positions of Deputy District Administrator (DDA) and Director General (DG) positions exceed the 30% quota; 6 out of 7 DDAs (85.7%) and 2 out of the 5 DGs (40%) respectively are women.

Table 2: Women Magistrates in Community Courts

Region/Zoba	Total	Male	Female	% female
Central	174	127	47	27.0%
Debub	619	440	179	28.9%
Anseba	327	273	54	16.5%
Northern Red Sea	99	69	30	30.3%
Southern Red Sea	90	67	23	25.6%
Gash-Barka	465	399	66	14.2%
National	1,774	1,375	399	22.5%

Source: Eritrea - Beijing Platform for Action Country Report. March 2004.

5.3.4 NUEW has over the years been engaged in campaigns to promote electoral awareness among women. Campaign managers were trained and equipped with promotional materials to encourage women to stand for election. As a result a substantial number of women were elected as area/village administrators or deputies in the last election. Out of 395 administrators and deputies elected in the Southern (Debub) Region, 47 (close to 11%) were women up from 3 in the previous election.

5.3.5 With the awareness campaign, support and training, a considerable number of women were elected for the first time ever as community magistrates (22.5%). The representation of women in the judiciary at national level is much lower however. Only 14.3% of high court judges, 12% of zonal (regional) court judges and 14.5% public prosecutors are women. Recruitment, retention and training initiatives have been put in place to address the gender imbalance within the judiciary. It has not been established whether the low level of representation

of women in the judiciary has had an adverse effect on women's access to justice at the higher level.

5.3.6 Female representation in the diplomatic service is also very low and has worsened since 2002. There are currently no women ambassadors, counsellors or attaches. In 2007 one women ambassador had been appointed but 16% and 40% respectively held the positions of First and Third Secretaries.

5.3.7 The position of women in other national organisations and the civil service reveals that men still dominate in leadership positions. For example in the National Confederation of Eritrean Workers (NCEW) and NUEYS the representation of women is around 30% in the respective Central Committees. Both organizations have established gender units. Women hold 27.2% of all government posts, predominantly in junior and clerical categories: administrative and clerical (41%), junior professional positions (29%) and professionals (11.6%).

Recommendation to government:

- **Despite reserved seats for women in leadership and decision making positions, they still lag behind men. In other African countries the 30% quota has been replaced by a 50% target. The same strategy might help Eritrea to reach the 30% quota. Campaigns to sensitize, encourage and prepare women to take up leadership positions and support fellow women must be combined with campaigns to also sensitize men about the abilities of women to lead.**

Recommendations to development partners:

- **The capacity of would be political candidates and female MPs needs to be built in a non-partisan manner so that they become more effective.**

5.4 Gender Based Violence

5.4.1 GBV takes many forms including FGM; rape/attempted rape, domestic violence, enforced child bearing and early child marriages to older men. A number of research reports acknowledge that all forms of violence against women are underreported in Eritrea as most victims are prevented by custom and fear from reporting the assaults against them. Eritrean police do not always record any violence against women as a separate category, making it impossible to accurately state prevalence.

5.4.2 Although **rape** is a criminal offence in Eritrea, there is a provision in the Penal Code that if the perpetrator of rape decides to marry the victim with the consent of the latter the prosecution is closed. The provision has its origin in customary laws/codes which favours this resolution of rape since it preserves the honour of the family and regularises the sexual intercourse and appeases the "owners" of the girl's sexuality, namely the parents. In fact, some parents of raped girls prefer to marry their daughters to the offender in order to cover up the offence and shame inflicted on the family, ignoring the sexual injury and the emotional trauma of their daughter. Perpetrators of rape, in turn, opt to marry their victims as a means of escaping justice, only to divorce the women soon after the marriage.

5.4.3 In a study conducted among female ex-combatants, returnees and internally displaced people, 11.5% of the respondents said they knew rape victims. Of these cases 21.7% were reported to family members, 30.4% to the police and 4.5% were settled by marriage. Of the cases reported to the police only 66.7% of the perpetrators were punished.

5.4.4 **Forced early marriage and betrothals** occur when parents or others arrange for, and/or force a minor to marry someone. Force may occur by exerting the pressure of “it is the custom” or by the senior male member of the family ordering a minor to get married. Pressure may be exerted to obtain a bride wealth or to settle a dispute over land or other matters between the two families (see above in the case of rape). Forced marriage is a form of GBV because the minor is not allowed to, or is not old enough to, make an informed choice. Betrothal is a formal state of engagement to be married and various customary laws in Eritrea authorise betrothal, which is normally arranged for girls between the ages of 8 to 15 years and boys between 12 and 15 years of age.

5.4.5 Underage marriage for girls which often happens at the age of 13, has been a common practice in the past among Eritrean communities, although this practice is on the decline. Some of the discriminatory traditional and customary practices related to marriage, such as bride wealth, marriage by abduction, underage marriage and marriage without consent were campaigned against by the EPLF in liberated areas during the liberation struggle. The current legal age of marriage for girls is 18 years.

5.4.6 **Domestic violence** is defined as sexual, physical, and psychological abuse. In a study conducted in 2000 32.5% of the respondents had witnessed a man beating his wife. Stated reasons included jealousy, mismanagement of housekeeping money and absence of wife when husband came home. Some women were beaten because the husband was drunk or they had not prepared food on time. Nearly half (46.1%) kept their experience of domestic violence a secret; less than a quarter (21.3%) reported their husbands to the police; 35.3% reported the matter to family arbitrators; and 6.1% of the women filed for divorce. Only 34.3% of the reported husbands were punished, while 22.9% were given counseling and 34.3% received warning, and 8.6% divorced their wives for reporting them.

5.4.7 In Eritrea, any form of **trafficking in women, infants and young persons for sex** is prohibited by law and is considered a criminal act. The criminal code stipulates that, whosoever, for gain, or to gratify the passion of another: i) Trafficking in a woman or an infant or a young person, whether by seducing them, by enticing them, or by procuring them or other wise inducing them to engage in prostitution even with their consent; or ii) Keeps such a person in disorderly house or let out to prostitution is punishable under the transitional criminal code (Art. 605).

5.4.8 According to NUEW, young Eritrean women are involved in **prostitution** mostly because of being unemployed, having dropped out of school or because of poverty. Currently soliciting by prostitutes, living on the earnings of prostitution, the enslavement of women for sexual purposes and the keeping of brothels are prohibited by law. The Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare (MoLHW) tries to reduce prostitution by creating alternative jobs that address the various social and economic causes. In addition the government has since 1999 been undertaking programs aimed at the rehabilitation of commercial sex workers whilst a joint program by the Ministry of Health, NUEW, NUEYS and other stakeholders is aimed at reducing unsafe sex and at discouraging young women from getting involved in prostitution. The same programme introduces a positive approach to discourage men’s involvement in such acts.

5.4.9 **FGM** is widely practiced in Eritrea and refers to all procedures involving partial or the total removal of external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs for cultural or any other reasons. The origins of the practice are not known but are said to predate

Christianity and Islam. Clitoridectomy, the removal of prepuce and the tip of the clitoris, with or without incision of part or the whole of the clitoris, is considered the lightest form of FGM, and infibulations, the sewing of the two parts of vulva closed over the vagina, thus narrowing the vaginal opening after the removal of the clitoris and labia minora, is the most extreme form of FGM. The latter has the most serious health and psychological effects, and might involve frequent de-and re-infibulations

Box 8: Best Practice: NUEWs Anti-FGM Campaign

NUEW has integrated FGM work into its activities since 1979. Until 2002 the campaigns had very little effect because only women and specific villages were targeted. This meant that men were left out and that targeted villages were able to move FGM activities to neighbouring villages. Since 2003 a new project focused on male and female community leaders, such as activists, teachers, religious leaders, respected elders and administrators. The strategy has been to establish committees with trained campaign members at all levels of the zoba and to work through social mobilization and sensitization in village meetings, IEC and media campaigns and education of communities on FGM and its effects.

In addition the project also offers micro-credit to create alternative means of income for circumcisers. A separate approach focuses on secondary school students nationwide, their teachers and their communities. The project hinges on a participatory approach of awareness raising and a holistic treatment of FGM which includes HIV/AIDS, gender awareness, lifting the taboo on sexuality, informing about health risks, RH and human rights issues. Moreover the new approach targets whole communities and the whole zobas. NUEW employs a non-coercive and non-judgemental approach, which builds on awareness, knowledge, collective commitment and accountability.

NUEW was initially against making FGM illegal for fear that this would drive the practice underground, causing girls with complications to not seek medical care, for example. Later it was realised that making FGM a criminal offence is an important step that goes hand in hand with the large-scale sensitization and behaviour change approach, the two supporting each other. It is hoped that the law will better enable individuals to repudiate the practice and help spread the message. FGM was outlawed in 2007.

5.4.10 The prevalence of FGM is highest in North Red Sea Zone (97.7%) followed by Zoba Anseba (96.4%), Gash Barka (94.6%), Southern Red Sea Zone (92.2%), Zoba Maekel (83.2%) and Zoba Debub (81.5%). The first ever survey was undertaken in 1995 and the prevalence then was 95%, while the DHS survey of 2002, showed a slight decline of 6% to 89%. The prevalence is highest among Bilen (75%), Afar (68%) and Hidareb (56%) ethnic groups. Returnees from the Sudan also have a high prevalence (48%).

5.4.11 Many reasons have been given to justify FGM. Respondents of a study in 2003 quoted as reasons tradition, culture and religion (56 %), control of sexuality (19%) and neatness (16 %). Other reasons mentioned are: shame and isolation if not mutilated; the clitoris will grow if not cut; cutting the clitoris helps the child grow up fast and proper; FGM increases beauty and cleanliness; and not being mutilated causes early death, difficult deliveries and abnormal, sick children. Only 8% performed FGM on their daughter because they believed that it constituted a necessary transition to adulthood. NUEW believes that the core cause of FGM is, in fact, gender inequality.

5.4.12 FGM is carried out by female traditional practitioners (60%), followed by grand mothers and mothers (22%), traditional birth attendants (8%) and health personnel (3%). The age at which FGM is inflicted on young girls varies with religion, ethnic group and personal preferences of parents. Usually FGM is practiced on babies and small girls who are unable to refuse or make an informed decision. The effects of FGM are physical and psychological. Immediate effects include excessive bleeding and shock, more long-term effects include painful urination and menstruation, retention of urine and menstrual blood which can lead to infections, painful sexual intercourse and prolonged and obstructed labour during child-birth which can lead to fistula. Other more indirect effects include damage to the bone-structure through the tight binding of the legs of small girls and babies after FGM.

5.4.13 The MOH formulated a **National Strategy on Female Genital Mutilation Abandonment in Eritrea (2006)** which takes a multi-sectoral approach, encourages community participation and involvement of political and religious leaders, supports male involvement and highlights gender equality as a precondition for eradication. It also promotes an integrated and coordinated approach. Lead agencies in the fight against FGM are MOH, NUEW and NUEYS. A national baseline survey on FGM, which had been recommended by the strategy, has already been finalized by NUEW. Extensive public awareness of the dangers and immorality of FGM has been promoted by both public and religious leaders.

Recommendations to government:

- **The Police and judiciary need to be (re)-trained to ensure that cases of domestic violence, in all its forms, are treated the same way as any other criminal act, and are prosecuted according to the law**
- **The campaigns of NUEW build on a holistic approach and target women, men, religious and traditional leaders, and the women who perform FGM need to be continued and scaled up to cover the whole country. In addition the authorities must investigate cases of violations of the law and enforce the law as harshly as is warranted when such violations are revealed.**

Recommendations to development partners:

- **FGM eradication activities need to be mainstreamed in all project interventions.**

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 The results of the profile show that Eritrea has gone a long way towards achieving gender equality, and that the experience of the war which attracted so many women to actively participate laid the groundwork for government's commitment to achieve the social and economic empowerment of women. This has been most seriously demonstrated by the introduction of laws and regulations that seek to protect women and to increase their access to productive resources including land and to increase their numbers in decision making through a quota.

6.2 However, resistance based on custom and tradition re-established itself in civilian life and now presents hurdles to the achievement of gender equality. Women and men particularly in rural areas are not fully aware of new legal provisions which protect and support women and authorities continue to apply older provisions which gave men more rights: land rights are an area where change is occurring but at a slow steady pace. More information and sensitization campaigns need to be conducted and legal enforcement of regulations be stepped up. Change has also been slow in bringing women into decision making, and the 30% quota established in favour

of women has not been sufficient to increase the number of women significantly or fill the quota. In this area too, more needs to be done to encourage women to participate and to sensitize men to the benefits of also having female leaders. In order to allow women to expand their informal micro-enterprises and address economic empowerment micro-finance facilities need to be urgently expanded and regulations for registration and licensing further simplified and facilitated, also outside Asmara.

6.3 Unlike many other countries Eritrea has chosen to mandate NUEW, formerly women's mass movement which has turned into NGO, as the national machinery for the advancement of women. In the absence of other significant national NGOs which address gender equality, NUEW is required to both monitor and coordinate gender equality activities and to implement them. This double role stretches the capacity of the organisation. It is recommended that the role of NUEW vis-à-vis the government be clarified and a separation of sections dealing with coordination and oversight on the one hand and implementation on the other hand be effected. The inclusion of civil servants in coordination unit is also recommended.

6.4 Since women have been carrying out much of farming work as men are away at the front, provision of agricultural services needs to respond to this reality and cater for the needs of women, be it access to extension, training, credit, inputs or inclusion in farming committees. By the same token, environmental degradation is a real problem in Eritrea threatening to further decrease the area of arable land, which has disastrous effects on food security and further increases women's workload. A multi-sector approach to stop environmental degradation is urgently needed and it should make sure that women are included as not only workers but also as decision-makers.

6.4 Eritrea has progressed rapidly since independence by expanding access to education, also for girls, and health care. Despite impressive gains, some areas need serious attention. These include the increasing gap between boys and girls enrolments particularly at higher levels in favour of boys, the high drop-out rate of boys in secondary school and fact that men do not sufficiently participate in adult literacy classes. Research need to be conducted in order to establish the reason for these worrying trends and measures to be put in place to reverse them.

6.5 With regard to the provision of health services, the low rate of contraceptive use, which has been stagnant for years, and the large number of births without medically trained personnel need urgent attention. TBAs can be useful in areas where trained personnel still lacks but they cannot replace EmOC facilities to prevent maternal mortality. TBAs also need incentives to send women with complicated pregnancies to facilities and maternity waiting homes close to facilities are particularly important in areas where coverage is low. It is therefore recommended that these facilities be extended. Contraceptive use should be increased through an integrated approach linking U5 and fertility control services, and youth need to be persuaded to access contraceptives by offering facilities that respond to their needs. FGM is widely practiced in Eritrea, and NUEW has developed a successful multi-pronged strategy for behaviour change which culminated in the passing of a law against the practice. Resources will be needed to roll-out the programme to all areas of Eritrea and to continue activities in areas covered already, since behaviour change is a long-

6.6 Eritrea is a country which experienced and endorsed gender equality during the struggle for independence. Gender equality has therefore become part of society and needs now to be consolidated through education, sensitization, and enforcement of legal provisions. Getting the

institutional framework is also crucial, since gender mainstreaming requires well established offices and procedures to succeed.

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DAILY ACTIVITY PROFILE FOR RURAL MEN AND WOMEN IN ERITREA

Time spent on activities	men	women
5.00-6.00 am		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wake up • Milk cow • Prepare tea/breakfast
6.00 – 8.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wake up • Eat breakfast • Go to the farm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare breakfast and bake INJERA • Wakes up the children and help them to wash and get ready for school • Gathers the family and serves breakfast • Sends the children to school or to milk or herd the sheep/goats
8.00 – 10.00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with farm work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ploughing - planting - weeding - harvesting - threshing cereals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fetch water • Open pen for sheep/goats • Fetch firewood/water • Cleans the house/prepares cereals, legumes or spices and goes to mill to grind • Go to farm
10.00am–12.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with farm work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with farm work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Weeding - planting - harvesting
12.00 – 1.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a break • Eat lunch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook / warm lunch for children and family • • Eat lunch • Clean up/Wash the dishes
1.00 – 4.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with farm work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue with farm work
4.00 – 5.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaves farm • Feeds and milks cows/helps children to tend animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave farm • Go get water and/or firewood
5.00 -6.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest / go out for a drink 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fetch water • Prepare supper • Brews traditional beer
6.00 – 7.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat supper • Drinks coffee/traditional beer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat supper • Wash dishes
7.00 – 8.00 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to bed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sieves flour, prepares dough for the next day, roasts cereals or legumes to prepare some food stuffs • Bakes injera • Prepare lunch for following day • Clean kitchen/cooking area/house
8.00-9.00/11.00pm		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go to bed

**Daily activity profile compiled after interviewing men and women in the rural areas visited during the field mission.*

ERITREA DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

Social Indicators	Eritrea		Africa	Developing countries
	1990	2007 *		
Area ('000 Km ²)	118		30,323	80,976
Total Population (millions)	3.2	4.9	963.7	5,448.2
Population growth (annual %)	1.5	3.3	2.3	1.4
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	49	58	54	65
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	96.1	55.3	85.3	54.1
Physicians per 100,000 People	...	4.9	39.6	78.0
Births attended by skilled health staff (% of total)	...	28.3	50.4	59.0
Immunization, measles (% of children ages 12-23 months)	...	95.0	75.4	78.0
School enrolment, primary (% gross)	23.0	66.3	96.4	91.0
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education (%)	96	80	91	84
Illiteracy rate, adult total (% of people ages 15 and above)	53.6	37.8	33.3	26.6
Access to Safe Water (% of Population)	43.0	60.0	62.3	80.0
Access to Sanitation (% of Population)	8.0	9.0	45.8	50.0
Human Develop. Index Value (0-1)	...	0.483	0.514	0.691
Human Poverty Index (% of Population)	...	...	36.8	...
Economy	1990	2000	2006	2007
GNI per capita, Atlas method (current US\$)	...	180	200	...
GDP (current Million US\$)	...	637	1,084	1,084
GDP growth (annual %)	...	-13.1	2.0	1.3
Per capita GDP growth (annual %)	...	-16.2	-1.5	-2.0
Gross Domestic Investment (% of GDP)	...	20.0	19.6	26.2
Inflation (annual %)	...	19.9	17.3	22.7
Budget surplus/deficit (% of GDP)	...	-41.7	-17.0	-18.1
Private Sector Development & Infrastructure	1990	2000	2006	2007
Time required to start a business (days)	...	...	84	84
Investor Protection Index (0-10)	...	...	5	5
Main telephone lines subscribers (per 1000 people)	...	8	...	...
Internet users (per 1,000 people)	...	1	...	...
Roads, paved (% of total roads)	19	...	...	...
Railways, goods transported (million ton-km)	...	...	...	...
Trade, External Debt & Financial Flows	1990	2000	2006	2007
Export Growth, volume (%)	...	3.2	7.0	9.3
Import Growth, volume (%)	...	-27.8	-17.0	10.4
Terms of Trade (% change from previous year)	...	0.5	-8.5	-4.7
Trade Balance (mn US\$)	...	-291.8	-387.5	-443.7
Trade balance (% of GDP)	...	-45.7	-33.4	-31.1
Current Account (mn US\$)	...	3.4	-23.9	-52.2
Current Account (% of GDP)	...	0.5	-2.1	-3.7
Debt Service (% of Exports)	...	9.3	42.3	41.4
External Debt (% of GDP)	...	51.6	54.5	46.8
Net Total Inflows (mn US\$)	...	183.4	136.0	...
Net Total Official Development Assistance (mn US\$)	...	175.8	129.1	...
Foreign Direct Investment Inflows (mn US\$)	...	27.9	3.7	...
External reserves (in month of imports)	...	1.0	0.6	...

Source: ADB Statistics Department, based on various national and international sources, * Most recent year

GENDER DISAGGREGATED EDUCATION DATA

Table 1: Elementary level: NER by Gender

School Year	Population age 7-11			Net enrolment			NER		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
1991/92	375,234	198,552	176,682	93,087	48,397	44,690	24.81	24.37	25.29
1995/96	427,429	225,658	201,771	133,496	69,958	63,538	31.32	31.00	31.49
2000/01	486,639	248,232	238,407	205,831	111,022	94,809	42.30	44.73	39.77
2005/06	518,357	268,669	249,688	272,401	146,588	125,813	52.55	54.55	50.39

Source: Eritrea: Essential indicators statistics 2005/06

Table 2: Elementary level: GER by Gender

School Year	Population			Gross Enrolment			GER			
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	
1991/9	375,234	198,55	176,6	150,982	81,746	69,236	40.24	41.17	39.1	0.85
1995/9	427,429	225,65	201,7	241,725	133,471	108,25	56.55	59.15	53.6	0.81
2000/0	486,639	248,23	238,4	298,691	164,523	134,16	61.38	66.28	56.2	0.82
2005/0	518,357	268,66	249,6	364,263	202,388	161,87	70.27	75.30	64.8	0.80

Source: Eritrea: Essential indicators statistics 2005/06

Table 3: Middle Level: NER by Gender by Gender

School Year	Population 12-13*			Net Enrolment			NER		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
1991/92	136,712	72,904	63,808	9,727	5,111	4,616	7.11	7.01	7.23
1995/96	155,725	82,856	72,869	9,988	5,299	4,689	6.41	6.40	6.43
2000/01	169,628	84,683	84,945	20,409	10,639	9,770	12.03	12.56	11.50
2005/06	299,324	151,298	148,026	66,708	37,334	29,374	22.29	24.68	19.84

Source: Eritrea: Essential indicators statistics 2005/06

Table 4: Middle Level: GER by Gender

School Year	Population 12-13*			Gross Enrolment			GER			GPI
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	
1991/92	136,712	72,904	63,808	27,917	14,414	13,503	20.24	19.77	21.16	0.94
1995/96	155,725	82,856	72,869	39,751	21,648	18,103	25.53	26.13	24.84	0.84
2000/01	169,628	84,683	84,945	76,564	41,457	35,107	45.14	48.96	41.33	0.85
2005/06	299,324	151,298	148,026	148,082	90,634	57,448	49.45	59.90	38.81	0.63

Source: Eritrea: Essential indicators statistics 2005/06

Table 5: Secondary Level: GER by Gender

School Year	Population of Age*			Gross Enrolment			GER			GPI
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	
1991/92	210,515	110,133	100,382	27,627	14,281	13,346	13.12	12.97	13.30	0.93
1995/96	239,805	125,167	114,638	39,188	23,713	15,475	16.34	18.95	13.50	0.65
2000/01	282,140	144,338	137,802	63,951	40,355	23,596	22.67	27.96	17.12	0.58
2005/06	336,080	168,631	167,449	77,644	50,351	27,293	23.10	29.86	16.30	0.54

Source: Eritrea: Essential indicators statistics 2005/06

*The population age was 14-17 until 2002/03, but 15-18 starting 2003/04 and onwards.

Table 6: Secondary Level: NER by Gender

Year	Population of Age*			Net Enrolment			Net Enrolment Ratio		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
1991/92	210,515	110,133	100,382	19,131	9,999	9,132	9.09	9.08	9.10
1995/96	239,805	125,167	114,638	23,780	12,788	10,992	9.92	10.22	9.59
2000/01	282,140	144,338	137,802	38,271	22,482	15,789	13.56	15.58	11.46
2005/06	336,080	168,631	167,449	44,637	25,942	18,695	13.28	15.38	11.16

Table 7: Enrolment in TVET schools by Gender

Academic Year	Advanced			Intermediate			Total Enrolment			Percentage		
	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F
1991/02				537	473	64	537	473	64	100	88.1	11.9
1995/06				535	476	59	535	476	59	100	88.9	11.1
2000/01	359	249	110	1403	1071	332	1762	1320	442	100	74.9	25.1
2005/06	122	90	32	1779	1104	675	1901	1194	707	100	62.8	37.2

Source: Eritrea: Essential indicators statistics 2005/06

Table 8: Participants in Literacy Training by Gender

Year	Enrolled			Completed the course		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
2001	3,362	51,084 (93.8%)	54,446	2,041	35,438 (69.4%)	37,479
2006	10,189	91,542 (89.1%)	102,731	8,033	81,703 (89.2%)	89,736
Total	40,972	368,096 (89.8%)	410,068	30,990	298,928 (81.2%)	329,918

Source: Eritrea: Essential indicators statistics 2005/06 (Figures for individual years, hence do not add up)

Table 9: Enrolment of Female Learners in Tertiary Education

1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
14.9%	14.4%	15.0%	14.5%	19.6%	16.2%	14.3%	5.7%*

Source: UoA, 2007 , Note: * The percentage of females in the diploma course were 27%

MAIN DONORS AND ACTIVITIES IN ERITREA

Stakeholder	Main activities
World Bank, EU, AfDB	Education Sector Development Program , including improved access (construction of schools), Curriculum, Textbooks, quality assurance & school support system; teacher Education and development, capacity building, technical support
World Bank	HAMSET I and II (HIV/AIDS, Malaria, STD and TB); Power Distribution and Rural Electrification project.
AfDB	Emergency Reconstruction Programme
UNICEF	Education Sector support to construction of feeder schools for better access, quality assurance, capacity building, health and sanitation facilities, girls' incentive scheme , research studies, workshops, teacher training, etc, provision of educational materials, support to education for all.
UNICEF	Child Immunization, safe motherhood, disease control, maternal health, Mother and child nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and water and sanitation.
UNESCO	Training of teachers, school materials for returnees, quality assurance in education, capacity building in education sector (updating of ICT)
UNPFA	Reproductive health , support to national road map for maternal and newborn health, maternal health, EmOC, referral, fistula, behaviour change communication, HIV prevention, Support capacity of National Statistical Office to collect analyse socio-economic data, support enforcement of legal policies for gender equality through capacity building of law enforcement officers, review and revision of legal documents, capacity building of NUEW and NUEYS, technical assistance in development of tools to facilitate gender mainstreaming, leadership training for community leaders and policy makers in community courts, mobilize communities for RH and against FGM, support NGOs to address GBV.
UNDAF	Gender equity in Eritrea – with NUEW: Establishment of a Gender research centre at NUEW; Capacitate 12 institutions in gender analysis, gender budgeting and monitoring of NGAP; Capacity to collect gender disaggregated data by line ministries; Advocacy for women and girls in education, decision-making, health and economy, BDV; Capacity of NUEW for economic empowerment of women in difficult circumstances; Access to credit and training for 5000 women in rural areas.
WHO	Communicable diseases surveillance, child and adolescent health, RH and women's and maternal health etc.
FAO	Promotion of date palm production; Child centres for delivery of urban gardening, nutrition and health program for orphans; Improve food security in drought prone areas; Food Security Programme; Nile Basin Water Management; Assistance to Massawa fish retail shops; Assistance to Foot fishermen.

WFP	Emergency Food Assistance, including wet school feeding, take home rations for girls and for adults in literacy and other training; rations for HIV/AIDS and TB patients.
NORAD	Cooperation with the national Statistical Office: Economic Statistics; Through Norwegian Church AID and NUEW: FGM work
Netherlands	Humanitarian and reconstruction assistance
Italy	Support to Emergency Reconstruction Programme and the health sector Strategy, with UNICEF support of orphans, support to Eritrean refugees in Sudan and to a programme against desertification.
Cuba	Secondment of doctors, teaching of doctors, contributions to development of public health, agriculture, fisheries and sports.
Catholic Relief Services	Agriculture: support to introduction of improved practices and seeds; Food assistance to returnees from Sudan; Integrated, participatory approach to village –based water management; Capacity development of women’s initiatives: skills training, creation of micro-savings programmes, psycho-social intervention for women in war affected areas.
Lutheran World Federation	Rural Community Development Programme including soil and water conservation, forestry, sanitation, micro-credit, water supply, feeder roads, irrigation; Social Infrastructure Development Programme to improve children’s access to schools, fostering girls participation in schooling through tutorials and financial incentives to cover school uniforms and books; Relief and rehabilitation.
Norwegian Church Aid	Strengthening of civil society through other church based organisation, HIV/AIDS work, supply of water and sanitation, GBV with emphasis on FGM and domestic violence
ACORD	Supply of micro-credit, many 3women beneficiaries and women in the decision-making. Active in.
Toker	Integrated Rural Development, very gender sensitive approach. Project areas in two <i>zobas</i>

Annex VII

Millennium Development Goals Indicators for Eritrea

	1990	1994	1997	2000	2003	2005	2015 Target
Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger							
Income share held by lowest 20 percent							
Malnutrition prevalence, weight for age (percent of children under 5)		41			40	..	24
Poverty gap at \$1 a day (PPP) (percent)							
Poverty headcount ratio at \$1 a day (PPP) (percent of population)							
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line (percent of population)		53			66		48
Prevalence of under nourishment (percent of population)					73	75	
Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education							
Literacy rate, youth total (percent of people ages 15-24)	61						
Persistence to grade 5, total (percent of cohort)							
Primary completion rate, total (percent of age group)		19.5	39.2	40.3	40.4	50.9	
School enrolment, primary (percent net)				41	48	47	82
Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women							
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (percent)			21	15	22	22	
Ratio of girls to boys in primary and secondary education (percent)				76.3	73.4	70	86-100
Ratio of young literate females to males (percent ages 15-24)	68						
Share of women employed in the non-agricultural sector (percent of total non-agricultural employment)			32				
Goal 4: Reduce child mortality							
Immunization, measles (percent of children ages 12-23 months)		51	73	86	84	84	98
Mortality rate, infant (per 1,000 live births)	88			61		50	20
Mortality rate, under 5 (per 1,000)	147			97		78	30
Goal 5: Improve maternal health							
Births attended by skilled health staff (percent of total)		20.6			28.3		69.6
Maternal mortality ratio (modelled estimate, per 100,000 live births)		985		630			246
Goal 6: Combat HP//AIDS, malaria, and other diseases							
Contraceptive prevalence (percent of women ages 15-49)					8		
Incidence of tuberculosis (per 100,000 people)	220	235	247	260	273	282	
Prevalence of I-HIV, female (percent ages 15-24)						1.6	
Prevalence of HIV, total (percent of population ages 15-49)					2.4	2.4	<2.4
Tuberculosis cases detected under 00Th (percent)			3.1	14.5	18.2	12.5	
Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability							
CO ₂ emissions (metric tons per capita)		0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2		
Forest area (percent of land area)				16		15	
GDP per unit of energy use (constant 2000 PPP \$ per kg of oil equivalent)							
Access to improved sanitation facilities (percent of population, WB data)	7					9	
Access to improved sanitation facilities (percent of population, WB data)		12			26		65
Access to improved water source (percent of population, WB data)	43					60	
Access to improved water source (percent of population, govt. data)		84			33		21
Nationally protected areas (percent of total land area)						5	
Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development							
Aid per capita (current US\$)		50.1	38.3	49.4	78	80.7	
Debt service (PPG and IMF only, percent of exports of G&S)				3			
Fixed line and mobile phone subscribers (per 1,000 people)		4.9	6.8	8.6	9.4	17.8	
Internet users (per 1,000 people)	0	0	0.1	1.4	2.3	15.9	
Personal computers (per 1,000 people)				1.7	3	8	
Total debt service (percent of exports of goods, services and income)				3			
Unemployment, youth total (percent of total labour force ages 15-24)							
Sources: World Bank, 2007, World Development Indicators; and 2005 MDG Report for Eritrea							

