

BRIEF SYNOPSIS ON UNIDO ACTIVITIES ON GENDER EQUALITY IN AFRICA

Rural development and gender equality are key elements of strategies to reduce poverty and create income and employment opportunities. People living in the rural peripheries, and especially women, shoulder the burden of the world's poverty particularly in the Least Developed Countries, in sub-Saharan Africa, and in post-crisis zones. Within the framework of a special UNIDO initiative targeting countries and regions emerging from a crisis situation, special needs for the economic empowerment of rural communities and women are addressed in order to promote their participation in and increase their contribution to the Post *Crisis* Industrial Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

The essential elements of this Programme are:

- . To create a business environment that encourages initiatives of rural and women entrepreneurs;
- . To enhance the human and institutional capacities required fostering entrepreneurial dynamism and enhancing productivity.

Business development services for rural and women entrepreneurs include entrepreneurship training, training manuals for women entrepreneurship development (WED) and small industry advisory services. Collective self-help capacities and advocacy roles are strengthened through assisting self-help entrepreneurial groups, applying the Multipurpose Village Workshop, and organizing Community-Production Centres.

Some examples of WID activities in Africa:

Ethiopia - UNIDO MSME Component within the Integrated Programme for Ethiopia) has paid special attention to gender and women entrepreneurship development. During the first phase, in collaboration with Enterprise Ethiopia, the UNIDO WED modules have been adapted to the local context and translated into Arabic. A series of TOT and pilot training sessions were organized. In the second phase, a reITeshcr course was organized in a TOT session in Nazareth. As a result of this, the modules were further refined and developed. They are prepared in such a way that, according to the needs of the beneficiaries, a tailor-made course can be organized.

Tanzania - UNIDO implemented a WED Programme for six years in Tanzania, focusing on food processing. The project ended in 2004 but the capacity developed through the project in terms of creation of a business development services provider is still functional and has gone international. A professional association was established for the beneficiaries of the project, which is now open to all food processing entrepreneurs (including a number of men). A credit mechanism was introduced jointly with a local NGO, which is still serving the needs of women entrepreneurs.

Morocco - UNIDO has been implementing since 2001 three projects in the Northern Region of Morocco, namely, in traditional weaving, drying fruits and production of olive oil. The project provided assistance in training the entrepreneurship, environmental aspects of production, marketing, quality control. In three years' time, the producers of all projects have exported their products to Europe and USA. The project also introduced bio-certification and traceability for food products to improve their potential for export to EU markets. UNIDO also assisted the women in organizing themselves, registering a trademark, in packaging and labeling, etc. The entrepreneurs were monitored throughout the duration of the project through coaches and were provided counseling and training.