

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN AFRICA: POLICIES AND PROGRAMME IN SUDAN

The government of Sudan has ratified the Sudan National Policy for Women Empowerment, which includes six conceptual areas for the advancement, promotions of status and capabilities of women.

The Policy, which was formulated by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child, focused on women capacity building in health and education, strengthening women capabilities and strengthening women participations in peace building and conflict resolution.

Madam Nadia Mohamed Eisa Gofoun, Minister Plenipotentiary/Deputy Head of Mission from the Embassy of the Republic of Sudan said this when presenting her talk on 'Empowerment of Women in Africa: Policies and Programmes in Sudan' on 14 August 2007 in Kuala Lumpur.

She said, the six different cores of the Sudan National Policy are on:-

- Health and Environment
- Education Policies
- Economic Empowerment
- Human Rights and Legal Knowledge
- Political Participations and Decision Making
- Field of Peace and Conflict Resolutions

The Health and Environment Policies and Programmes will include the improvement of the life expectancy age of women, contain the spread of HIV and STD diseases, ending the practises of female genital mutilation and improve the environmental and nutritional awareness among women. Among the programmes lined up under such policy is the Programme for Safe Motherhood and Programme for Women Campaign against AIDS.

While the Education Policies and Programmes will include creating societal awareness on the importance of education for girls, especially among the rural communities and providing more places for women in technical education fields.

On Economic Empowerment, the policy among others, will be consolidating women leadership and provide capacity building to enable women to acquire skills, knowledge and technology. The programmes for such policy will include increasing the ratio of women participating in economic planning and programmes.

Providing equal participation for all women groups in legislation formulation process and women instruments locally, regionally and internationally are among the policy on Human Rights and Legal Knowledge, whereby existing legislation

will be revised and instruments to measure its application with international agreements will be introduced.

On Political and Decision Making, political awareness of women and follow-up of political issues will be promoted, whereby working groups and informative programmes will be organised to enlighten women on how important for them to participate in the political process. Laws and regulations that prevent women from promotion to leading positions and decision-making posts will also be revised and the formation and activation of Women Unions and Women NGOs will be encouraged.

The consolidation of women participation in peace building and peace sustainability will be part of the policy in the Fields of Peace and Conflict Resolutions. In this aspect, the economic stability of the family will be given more emphasis, and legislations that protect women in conflict areas will be introduced and enforced.

According to Madam Nadia, the Sudanese women movement was a successful one, where by 1965; they managed to get parliamentary and ministerial positions, including women Shariah Judges, Ambassadors, senior police and security officers, businesswomen, and doctors.

She said, out of the 39 million population, 49.6 percent are women, where 55 percent of women enrolled in secondary schools and 58.2 per cent are graduates. Senior women in civil service reached 41 percent and 87.8 per cent in agricultural activities.

The talk, the first Gender Series was organised by the NAM Institute for the Empowerment of Women (NIEW), an international learning institute under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, which contributes to the empowerment of women and human capital development of NAM Member Countries.

The NIEW Gender Series Talk was attended by representatives from Government Ministries and Agencies, Institutes of Higher Learning, Non-Governmental Organizations and Foreign Missions in Kuala Lumpur. Prof. Madya Dr. Jariah Masud, Associate Professor, Family Economics/Gender and Development from University Putra of Malaysia acted as moderator.

The main objective of the talk is to provide a forum for information exchange among NAM Member Countries on the latest issues, laws regulations policies and programmes that impact on gender development. Besides that, it will also provide the basis for training needs analysis for NIEW and for future research work in gender and development. The talk will be organised once every two months, whereby the next Gender Series Talks will be held subsequently in October and December this year.

The NAM Institute for the Empowerment of Women, also known as NIEW will be officially launched on the 10th September 2007.