EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATISATION

EXPERIENCES OF KENYA, UGANDA AND TANZANIA

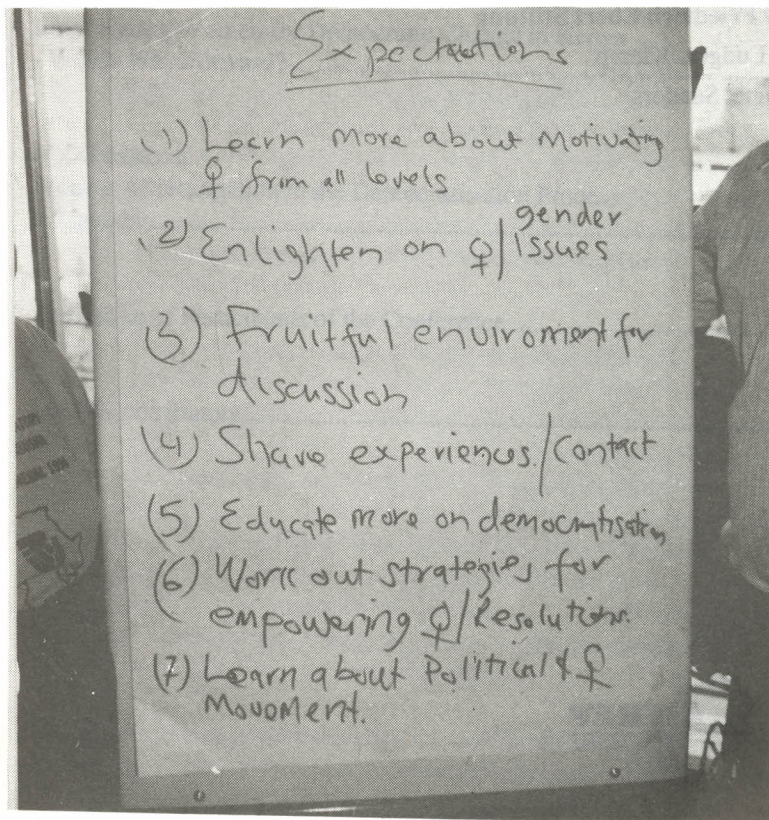**FRIEDRICH EBERT STIFTUNG**

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATISATION - EXPERIENCES OF KENYA, UGANDA AND TANZANIA

DOCUMENTATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA ON 5TH - 6TH SEPTEMBER 1994

Expectations of participants

EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATISATION - EXPERIENCES OF KENYA, UGANDA AND TANZANIA

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INTRODUCTION TO THE CONFERENCE

This Conference is part of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung commitment to women's issues. For several years the FES has been emphasising efforts to improve the status of women. Our women's programmes include all measures which improve the socio-economic status of women, free them from discrimination, enhance their political participation and respect their rights.

New opportunities for women are a consequence of democratic changes taking place in many parts of the world. Gender equity must be seen not only as the goal of politics, but as its basic. Women in politics are a real challenge which can generate new perspectives; in general, women have a different perception, they have a different understanding of the concept of power. Women see "power" in a much broader sense - encompassing not only politics but also the nature of relations in other social and economic entities such as communities and families. This female conception of power can restructure society and influence the style and nature of democratic government. Because of their own experiences of discrimination, women are more sensitive to disadvantage and oppression.

This perspective can lead to the rehabilitation of the concept of political power, which is quite often related to the misuse of political power and the oppression of the weaker groups in society. The participation of women in the process of democratisation can help overcome the separation of everyday life and political affairs by building a civil society where different groups are respected and can influence politics. Women may shape democratic structures according to their needs and interests because political participation is more than just voting.

Let me give you an example of how some women feel about politics in this country. We are not sure about the representativeness of our experience, but you may have your own opinion. In our income generating projects in rural Tanzania, which we have been running since 1987, women reported that they were not informed about how local government operates. They did not know about the existing regulation for special seats for women at local government level. In one village women complained they were misinformed. They were told that they were not allowed to stand for election. When they went to vote they found out from district supervisors that they did have the right to stand as candidates. These women felt that transparency is lacking and that they are excluded from local government issues. They have asked for assistance in order to overcome gender inequalities due to the existing system.

Due to this experience we decided to put local government issues on the agenda of our training activities. These had concentrated on technical and managerial training for

operating food processing machines in the past. The reaction to our programme was: Why didn't you deal with it earlier? Why are you so late? Women's economic and social contribution and their obligation to the well-being of family and community, in other words, their essential role in community organisations, should correspond with political responsibilities. To develop the knowledge and attitudes of rural women to enable them to master political change is a major challenge. Full participation will depend on knowledge and access to information. But in our opinion it is particularly important that political, social and cultural leaders at all levels set examples of the equal treatment of women.

Today's Conference is not meant to be a single event, but one step in a series of activities. I hope that the discussions may give us other perspectives on the potential of women in politics and bring the government closer to women and women closer to the government.

Dr. Ludgera Klemp, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung   Dar es Salaam, September 1994

Alice Yonan, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; Rose Shayo, University of Dar es Salaam

Pricilla Olekambaine

I feel deeply honored to have been asked to open this important conference on the empowerment of women in the process of democratisation. I have been asked to say something about this subject which seems to preoccupy the minds of many people throughout the world. In so doing, i am mindful of the fact that present in this conference are some very important women holding key decision-making positions in different places beginning from the district to national levels.

I am also made to understand that during your two day conference here, you will concentrate on sharing experiences as well as analysing problems and challenges that women face in the democratisation process. It is as recently as two months ago when i participated in a similar conference to this one which was organised by the female academic members of the udsm in collaboration with the ministry of community development, women affairs and children. The focus of the conference was the position of women under multiparty democracy in tanzania. The focus of this workshop is on empowering women in the process of democratisation.

There have been so many studies documenting the role of women in the process of production and consumption. Most of them tend to show the marginal position of the majority of women and some continue to highlight some of the underlying factors - e.G. Patriarchy, class, culture, religion etc. Women have continued, for many years, to live with those realities. No wonder the earlier meeting tried to consider the role of women under multi-party democracy after the introduction of multi-party politics in tanzania in 1992.

It seems that the findings and recommendations of the first conference and others of a similar nature will help in strengthening the deliberations and conclusions of this conference and i am delighted to see that a number of participants who were in the july conference are also among us today.

There is an additional reason for satisfaction that those two conferences should take place within a very short interval. This fact indicates that we are closely following the state of affairs in the democratisation process. In turn this suggests that there is a problem in the way things are done and that there is a need to develop more appropriate strategies to ensure that both women and men participate equally in the democratisation process.

Our independent governments in the east african region decided after independence to develop just societies where all men and women are respected before the law. The post independent states emphasised this in their constitutions. Although there were a number of factors which hindered full realisation of their wishes which we all know, we still need to discuss new strategies of enabling the general masses to influence decisions made.

My main concern today is, however, to concentrate on the issue of democracy and particularly how it affects women. Although there are many definitions of democracy, i wish to adopt the following simple definition given by one author:

> "Democracy is the right of the people to run their lives according to their wishes either directly or through their chosen representatives".

There is no doubt that your rich experience is going to enrich this definition to suit women's expectations, needs and realities. It is my hope that during your two day conference here, you will devote your time and energies to raising and discussing issues of democracy and human rights in addition to revisiting the former strategies used by women to assert their rightful position in the democratic process. Indeed there are high expectations that your discussions will not minimise the relationship between democracy, human rights and economic empowerment of women. It is also hoped that your deliberations will touch on the need to and means of accepting tolerance and dialogue within the multi-party system as well as the means of achieving women's solidarity despite the diversities in political affiliation.

Let me assure you that my ministry will receive and consider whatever deliberations you come up with very seriously to prove the solidarity existing between the government civil society and women.
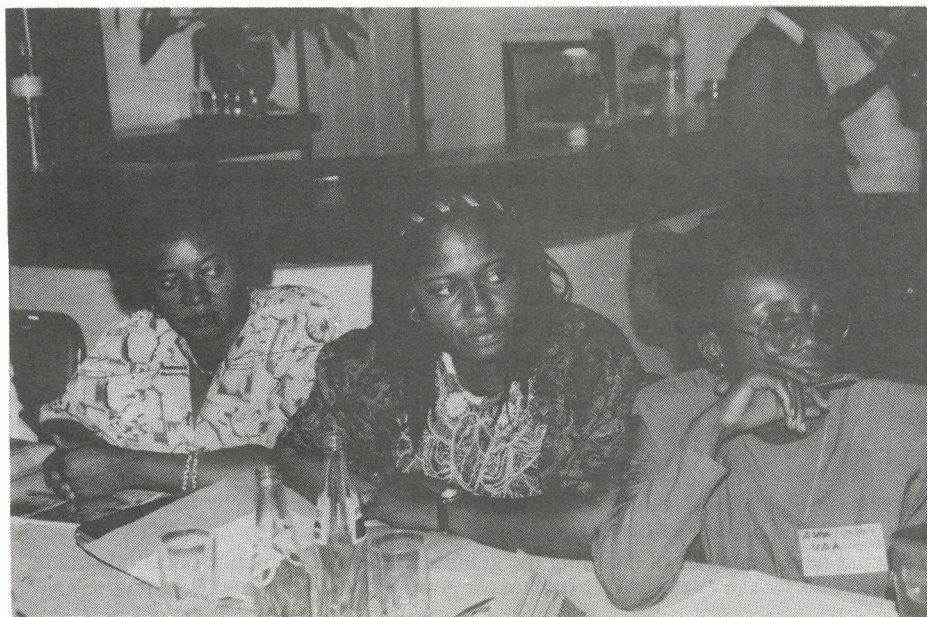
Participants of the Conference

WOMEN AND POLITICS IN TANZANIA

by Bertha Koda and Rose Shayo

Women's marginalised position in political processes is a shared global phenomenon, yet the constitutions of most national governments and political parties contain relevant clauses explicitly expressing gender equality in governance. In Tanzania for instance clauses like "every citizen has the right to take an equal part in Government at local, regional and national levels" are common in formal constitutions. Tanzanian women are renowned for their immense contribution to socio-economic and cultural development, yet they largely remain implementors of decisions made by men. Women's peripheral position in politics is very much influenced by both the patriarchal system of socialization and the institutionalized process of political participation.

1.   FORMS OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The definition of political participation has generally been confined to elections and the holding of office in political organs and the civil service. However, this definition is becoming increasingly inadequate for explaining the realities of political life, especially with respect to women's participation. Hence there is a need to redefine it to include other forms of participation. Attempts to redefine politics are scanty. Waring (1985:14), for instance, correctly contends thus: "Politics involves the legal, social, environmental, medical, labour and familial systems that we interact with".

Women's participation in politics relates to their participation in national development. Both socio-economic and ideological factors, therefore, influence women's political actions. Tanzanian women, as well as others in Sub-Saharan Africa, are known for their active participation in more than one activity at any given time and hence instinctively have the potential for a broader understanding of politics than men (Waring 1985). Given the multiplicity of political action, forms of political participation essentially include:-

Institutionalised formal participation

This includes membership of parliament and other decision-making organs, as well as the holding of office as leader in both central and local government, political parties, associations, NGOs, community based organisations (CBOs) and other types of groups.

Informal non-structured non-formal participation

This includes cultural movements (street theater, music etc.), lobbying, negotiating, broadcasting transformative news, networking and cementing solidarity, running work-

shops and raising consciousness, producing position papers, petitioning, decision-making at household level etc. Even passiveness (silence) is a form of political action which can be as strong and far more transformative than other forms of political participation.

In evaluating women's political participation, two yardsticks are usually used i.e numerical (quantitative) strength (actual number of leaders) as well as qualitative participation (the positive impact derived from participation in politics). The latter is very difficult to measure since social changes which are supposed to be influenced by political decisions are an outcome of more than one input. Numerical power on the other hand is easily measured by counting. This aspect of power is a very important weapon in political life, especially in a system where voting for a motion is widely practised or where solidarity based on gender is crucial, as in the case of Tanzania and probably in other countries where a patriarchal ideology and life-style are dominant. However, both quantitative and qualitative participation are influenced by the amount of power (finance, ability to talk, social esteem etc) one controls. This is one item in politics which is increasingly becoming a commodity that most women are denied, or else do not use as effectively as they should. The root causes of this gender power imbalance are the socialisation process as well the patriarchal property relations and inheritance rights which have reserved politics for males. The female gender has been socialized to submissive, nurturing, non argumentative, compromising and putting herself second (Waring 1985: 30), hence denied the power to engage in "real politics". However, women may not necessarily be interested in "male-dominated politics" where power is exercised "over" somebody and not shared with others.

Much as politics seem to have no boundaries, there are certain pre-requisites for being a good politician. In the first place, one has to know that political involvement essentially means volunteering, sacrificing and persevering since politics is a long, tedious and demanding process. A good politician is therefore a person who is democratic, consulting, advising, motivating, counselling and making rational choices. Besides, such a politician has to be both sensitive to gender and class consciousness to be able to cater for the interests of different categories of people in a given polity. Moreover a good politician does not operate in a vacuum. There has to be a favourable environment within which a politician operates.

2.   FAVOURABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Belief in democracy is a major pre-requisite for gender equality in political and public life. Tanzania believes in democracy and basic human rights as reflected in the state constitution. Tanzania is also signatory to the UN Convention on the Political Rights of

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the Women and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. These progressive gestures testify to both the ideological commitment and political will for gender equality in all spheres of life. The Ideology of Socialism and Self-Reliance which earned Tanzania a high reputation during the 1970s is another ideological stance with a strong bearing on women's political participation. Its rhetorical emphasis on the elimination of exploitation, oppression and discrimination was a good testimony to the intention to involve both men and women in the development process at every stage, including decision-making.

Policy Environment

The policy of Socialism and Self-Reliance of 1967 which emphasised democratic processes was followed by sectoral policies with positive impact on women's political participation. Educational policies such as Universal Primary Education and Adult Education, for, instance ensured girls' and women's access to basic education hence raising the educational status of women- a major pre-requisite for effective political participation. The policy on Women Development which has recently been enacted on the other hand contributes substantially to enhancing gender sensitization and gender equality hence clearing the ground for women's political participation.

Structural and Institutional Environment

In Tanzania and indeed elsewhere, specific political organs such as the parliament, political parties, civic associations, government offices, non-governmental organisations and other organs such as committees and the electorate organs have been established to facilitate, monitor and regulate political activities. At the grassroots level, on the other hand, the family or household is a key institution for political action.

Before 1993, political participation through political parties was very much limited due to the Single - Party Political system which was operational at that time. To date there are more than 15 registered political parties in Tanzania, although most of them are still at the embryonic stage. (Discussion on such parties will be provided below). The presence of such party organs has undoubtedly provided wider space for women's political participation both as members and leaders.

The establishment of a ministry responsible for women's affairs on the other hand has added more impetus and strengthened the base for women's active participation in politics and public life. Besides, the Women In Development (WID) units created in line-ministries have motivated many women and facilitated the active and effective participation in decision-making and planning, hence widened space and scope for women's

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political participation. The increasing support of both international as well as national NGOs' has also contributed much to women's increasing participation in politics and public life. Resources channelled to women (either as individuals or in groups) in terms of finance, training, material and moral input, for instance, have increasingly empowered women for effective political action.

3.   WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BEFORE INDEPENDENCE

Women are renowned for their ability to initiate informal political fora as an effort to circumvent the cultural and statutory limitations to formal politics. Both before and during colonialism, Tanzanian women were consistently making informal but binding decisions on socio-economic and political issues. Much as their political involvement was informal, the influence they had on governance is unsurpassed although very little has been recorded about such achievements. There is an English saying that points out that "behind every successful man there is a woman". This is also true in the Tanzanian context where the position of women was and still is conspicuously peripheral in formal politics yet women are very influential in running both the family and government affairs and the activities of political parties.

Indeed, it is not easy to either quantify or qualify women's participation in informal politics, yet one can easily contextualise women's marginalised involvement in formal politics in established political institutions and structures existing at that time such as chieftainships, elders' councils, political parties, government organs and the Legislative Councils. Women's associations, women's sections within male-dominated political parties and the so-called "women's wings" are among the main formal structures facilitating women's political participation. In Tanzania such fora were found useful both during and after colonialism. The Tanganyika Council of Women (TCW), for instance, was initiated by the colonial administration during the 1950s as a top-down organ run in a bourgeois style and was very discriminatory in its recruitment of members (Koda 1975). Peasant women were not encouraged to join such a forum which was run like a domestic science club with concentration on cooking European foods, a non priority area for peasant women. Only wives of civil servants enjoyed the privilege of being members of the TCW. The structure of TCW was such that both national, provincial and district offices were opened and led by wives of both the provincial and district commissioners. The undemocratic nature of such an organ was not a total surprise to many Africans who equated the council with the colonial structures used to dominate the African masses.

The few political parties which were established to fight for independence during the early 1950s in both the Tanzanian mainland and the Isles were wise enough to facilitate

the formation of women's sections within their party structures to give room for women's full participation in the political struggles. Yet the TCW had some positive contributions which are worth noting. Undoubtedly, the council was the first formal organ in Tanzania with a female gender bias, and hence catering for a few of women's practical needs. Besides, its European style of operation added proof to the fact that grassroot African women needed to have their own socio-political organ to cater for their needs and to ensure meaningful political participation. Challenging the legitimacy of this council meant challenging the colonial system of administration, the role assumed by most pre-independent African led political parties such as TANU, ASP and the African Congress Party.

4. THE EMERGENCE OF THE UNION OF WOMEN OF TANZANIA (UWT) AND THE AFRO-SHIRAZI PARTY WOMEN'S SECTION

During the early days of their existence, the few political parties established in Tanzania (the then Tanganyika and Zanzibar nations) had very few female members. The patriarchal culture which shaped the Africans' socio-economic and political life was still dominant and harmoniously coexisted with the colonial culture. The need to have African women's own mini-associations was a necessity accepted by political parties as a way of creating culturally accepted avenues for women's political participation. Within the then active political parties like the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) and Afro-Shirazi Party, (ASP) women's sections were established and led by African women such as Bibi Titi Mohamed. These newly established women's associations attracted both wage earners and peasant women and the increased number of members boosted up membership in their respective political parties.

Objectives of such women's associations were very similar as they all aimed at women's increased political participation and gender equality. The UWT objectives, for instance, as stipulated in the constitution under article II were:

- To unite all the women of Tanganyika in their union.
- To maintain the dignity and integrity of the Tanganyika nation.
- To encourage and stimulate women's political, economic, educational and cultural development.
- To advise and cooperate with TANU and the government on all matters affecting women.
- To cooperate with international women's organisations whose policies are in conformity with UWT's.
- To cooperate with all other TANU affiliates in accordance with the basic principles of Socialism and Self-Reliance, for the benefit of the Tanganyika nation regardless of one's colour, tribe, religion, social status or nationality.

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The context within which such objectives were drawn is indicative of the fact th women's interpretation of politics goes beyond the generally accepted confines (decision making. For women, politics, economics and social life are intertwined. It is r wonder therefore that UWT's efforts were directed to both education and training, heal and child care, service to the youth and economic empowerment for women to boost u both living standards and national economic status. Similar objectives were shared by th ASP women section. This very progressive interpretation of politics is still shared b many Tanzanian women today, as will be elaborated later.

Much as efforts were initiated to fulfil the objectives of both these formal women' organs, starvation in terms of resources including finance, transport, and qualifie human- power very much limited the degree of success. Indeed branches of suc organisations were established nationwide at the grassroots level but most of them wer less active than expected. However, such opportunities opened for women of all walk of life to meet and discuss their problems, needs and strategies and paved the way fo increased gender-specific strategising as dictated by the rule of patriarchy which is stil dominant in Tanzania. As a result of initiatives taken by these women's sections, tangible economic achievements have also been recorded over the years in terms of cash anc material gains for women and their families. Legal improvements were also made possible, initiated and pressurized by the women's organisations and their allies.

TANU and ASP women's sections continued to address women's problems even after independence and by 1962 the TANU women's section was upgraded to a national women's organisation. In 1977, when ASP and TANU were merged into the Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Revolutionary Party) - CCM - the two women's organisations were also merged and formed the new UWT as a national organ operating both in mainland Tanzania and the Isles. UWT remained an affiliate (wing) of the ruling party (CCM) and the sole national women's organisation until 1992 when multiparty democracy was re introduced in Tanzania with the formation of women "wings" in almost every registered political party.

5. WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN MALE-DOMINATED GOVERNING OR GANS IN TANZANIA BEFORE MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY.

Women's access to formal male dominated political positions within the context of "modern" politics is usually associated with universal suffrage. In Tanzania the right t vote and be elected to leadership positions dates back to 1959 when universal suffrag was extended to all citizens. Membership to Parliament was, and still is, considere prestigious and a good indicator for political participation. In the 1961 Parliament onl 1.9% of the members were females. For the years 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 199

the percentage of female members for the Union Parliament was 4%, 4%, 7.3%, 10%, 10% and 8.2% respectively. (Parliament Office, Dar es Salaam). For the Zanzibar House of Representatives on the other hand, female members for 1980, 1985, 1988, 1990, 19993 was 7%, 10%, 11%, 15% and 15% respectively (CCM Headquarters, Zanzibar Office). The increase in the number of female members of Parliament from 1.9% in 1961 to 10% in 1990 emanates from the concerted efforts made by women's organisations in motivating women to contest parliamentary seats in the constituencies, the increased number of literate women and gender-sensitized men and the deliberate effort taken by the ruling party (CCM) to instil a quota system where 15 Parliamentary seats were reserved for women. Under the 1992 election law, the 15 nominal seats are upgraded to 15%, while for local government the number of seats reserved for women has risen to 25%. While the quota system is strongly debated the truth still remains that without the abolition of patriarchy, this positive discrimination strategy remains the best short term alternative. Already there are suggestions that the number of reserved seats for women should be raised from 15% to 30% in the Union Parliament but it still remains for women themselves to decide what they prefer and how they should lobby to get what they want.

There are also very strong allegations that the few female MPs available in Tanzania have not been fully utilised to ensure integration of gender needs in policy designing and implementation. While it is expected that they consult the people they represent and exchange views and information, ideally it should be a "two-way-traffic," where the masses also consult their MPs and hence empower each other for mutual benefit. The women in particular have not managed to utilise their MPs effectively. However, to be able to do so, a few strategies need to be acquired as follows:

- Learn how to lobby your MPs, that is, put them to work by sending them ideas, topical issues, relevant data/information etc;
- Congratulate them whenever they deserve it;
- Ask them to supply you with proposed legislation and discuss such legal issues in groups;
- Get together in groups and discuss strategies for implementation of decisions drawn in the Parliament;
- Send your MPs complaints etc.
  All the above outlined strategies involve consulting each other for mutual benefit.

These strategies also apply to women's relationship with the women's national machinery such as the ministry responsible for women's affairs, where queries, requests, petitions, position papers etc. should be directed. Likewise, this machinery needs to consult the relevant sections of society and seek ideas, advice, etc. in a democratic manner. Currently this democratic system of operation seems to be minimal hence the

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need for improvement since the fact still remains that both these organs are necessary for women's advancement and social development.

Appointments and promotions to high administrative, managerial, political and judicial posts is no better either as testified by the number of cabinet ministers for the Union government and other civil service leadership positions. For the years 1965, 1970, 1975, 1980, 1985 and 1990 for instance the percentage of full female ministers was 3%, 1%, 0%, 3%, 3% and another 3% respectively (Parliament office, Dar es Salaam). As we all know posts at ministerial level are highly political as major government decisions are drawn at Cabinet level. All policies, for instance, have to pass through the Cabinet for necessary refinements and endorsement for higher level decision-making. The history of Tanzania shows low female participation in the Cabinet. For the years 1965, 1975, 1990 and 1993 for instance female members accounted for only 10%, 0%, 12%, and 15% respectively. The Head of State is empowered to appoint cabinet ministers and Principal Secretaries. Much as there are adequately qualified women in the pool, very few are nominated for this post. It is most likely that the list of potential candidates sent to the Head of State contain very few women due to gender insensitivity among those who forward the names to the relevant authority. This also applies to the choice of members to different boards, heads of parastatal organisations, heads of regional and district authorities, etc., where male predominance is still portrayed as indicated in table I below.

Table No. I:

No. of men and women in Leadership Positions in Tanzania 1990

Position	No. of men	No. of women	Total	Percentage
Ministers	15	5	20	25%
Deputy Ministers	10	0	10	0
Principal Secretaries	20	1	21	5
Regional Commissioners	25	0	25	0
Area Commissioners	170	20	190	12
Chairman of Boards	449	1	450	0.2
Managing Directors	40	0	40	0
General Managers	409	1	409	0.24
Directors	72	2	74	2.7
Commissioners	24	0	24	0
Ambassadors	56	1	57	1.75

Source: Report of women leaders Workshop, IDM, Mzumbe 1988, by Laeticia Mukurasi.

Another glaring example is in the diplomatic service where very few ambassadors are women. For the years 1980, 1985, 1990 and 1993 for instance female ambassadors formed 1/27, 2/27, 2/29 and 2/29 respectively (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation).

Local Government

Local government is nearer to the grassroots and decisions made by this organ need to reflect the issues pertaining to the grassroots. The democratic process of decision-making therefore needs to be clearly in evidence at this level. This basic fact notwithstanding, women's participation in decision-making within the local government is very limited. The patriarchal system is even more pronounced at this supposedly democratic governing body where the male control prominent at the household level is reflected directly. The glaring example is the ten-cell leadership where the highest ever female participation found in a single village was 30%. As for village councillor in village governments, the highest percentage female participation ever recorded was 32%, with an average of 10%, even after the quota system introduced by the local government last year where 25% of councillors are supposed to be women. The fact that politics needs to be supported by "capacity building" is more applicable at this juncture where women need to be mobilised, encouraged, motivated, sensitized and trained if the quota system is to be effectively exploited. Moreover, the deep-rooted belief that politics is a male-domain needs to be dispelled to allow women to participate fully in formal politics.

Women's participation in local politics can also be measured by the number of female members of different organs and committees established at the village level, including school committees and community based organisations (CBOS). However, more research needs to be done to get tangible national data on this issue.

It is also interesting to note that the few women who are elected tend to cluster in those committees or departments which deal with social issues such as those related to community development, health, education etc. In most cases no women are elected to the key committees or important ministries such as that of planning and development. As a result, women's problems such as poor education and problems related to agriculture are not included in the village plans because of the low/or non participation of women.

Moreover, even the voices of the few women who are elected at times are overshadowed by the male domination in different committees. That is why women representatives have also failed to use their positions to influence national policies in a manner that is beneficial to the majority of women. Because of their low numbers, for example, women's efforts to appeal for the removal of different legislation that is discriminatory

to women in matters related to property ownership/land ownership, inheritance, different forms of violence against women etc. have not been considered seriously.

There are so many other issues of concern to women which demanded women leaders' voices but they are never discussed by them. Probably this is mainly due to the fact that because the majority of them are presidential appointees who were elected in the single party era, then they are afraid to challenge the status quo for fear of being victimized or voted out of their positions.

Grassroots level political organs on the other hand include the household where dynamic politics is also at play. The household is made up of members with different roles, needs, expectations and hopes, some of which are even contradictory to each other. Decisions on how to meet such needs are made every day, as there is a necessity for resource allocation. With the predominance of the patriarchal system however, control over politics at this level very much reflects male control over all important resources including time, labour, finance, means of production and immovable property. Women's struggles over access and control of such resources to meet both their practical and strategic needs are indeed no less than political action. Furthermore, the struggle for survival in the current hostile economic environment is part and parcel of women's political action. Without such struggles children would have died and the society would have crumbled. There is no doubt, for instance, that women consistently make sound decisions on how to budget the few resources available, how to console children and frustrated members of society including spouses and, above-all, how to make life continue amidst all the hardships. However, the undemocratic environment at the household level where men monopolize the process of decision-making and children are socialized to value males more than females is very demotivating. This absence of democracy negatively affects power relations even at the platform level hence the persistent gender imbalance in formal politics. The logic is such that undemocratic household relationships give way to dictatorial and authoritatian formal political life.

Party Organs

Prior to 1992, Tanzania enjoyed a Single Party system of political administration where the Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) reigned with total control. Much as CCM was a socialist-oriented party, the issue of gender equality in political participation was not very much translated into action. Indeed, female membership of CCM surpassed that of males. However, most leadership positions were and still are held by men. Female members in the Party Central Committee for instance has been negligible (not more than 7%) while membership to the National Party Congress has never exceeded 14% at any given time (1988 data).

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Leadership at lower levels shared more or less the same feature. Branch chair-persons and secretaries are still predominantly males. However, the quota system introduced in the 1980s where at least 2 members of the Party branch council of ten members were supposed to be females had much influence on both the size of female leadership and quality of decisions made. Yet, due to the limiting factors discussed above, female participation is still very much limited although no updated data is available to support this contention. With the dynamics of multi-party politics however, it is expected that CCM women will take advantage and pressurize for more democratic participation. Options are available for them to join the new political parties if CCM fails to satisfy them.

Mass Associations

Under the Single Party Political System there were 5 mass associations. Leadership in such organs (except for the UWT) at all levels was male dominated. In 1987, for instance, female participation in the workers organisation (JUWATA) leadership was as follows:

National Congress	2.3%
General Council1	9%
Executive Committee The General Council	20%
Heads of Departments at the Headquarters	3.3%
Heads of Sections	33.3%
Regional Chairpersons	4.5%
Regional Secretaries	4.5%
District Secretaries	3.3%

This low female participation in leadership partly explains why women's issues, including both practical and strategic needs, are not adequately addressed in both the policies and plans of either JUWATA or the current Organization of Tanzania Trade Unions (OTTU). Women are still sexually harassed at work places and their training and promotion needs are grossly ignored. Hence, they are still lowly paid with fewer fringe benefits. Even though there is a Women's Development Unit/Department within OTTU, which has done substantial work for the advancement of women workers, much more needs to be done to ensure gender equality at work. The challenge for more gender-sensitive female decision makers within OTTU structures is still unmet. Female participation is needed even more now when workers, and especially female workers, are easily pushed out of employment due to the retrenchment policies (and other social problems) currently being implemented by the state in line with IMF conditions. Very

minimal democracy is practised at work places and the situation is worsening day by day and as this happens, the leadership becomes even more dictatorial.

The presence of mass organisations on the other hand facilitated has more female involvement in public affairs and hence the increased number of females in both decision-making and influencing the choice and system of leadership. Socialization within such civic associations has had empowering effects on current party politics and democratic processes.

6. WOMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS GROUPS AND COMMUNITY BASED ORGANISATIONS

Women's associations are political organisations where women make important decisions. The history of Tanzania shows women's active involvement in such associations at all times. Within such organs women have been mobilized, encouraged, motivated and given chance to engage in "formal politics" which used to be the male-domain. The power of women to persuade, educate,, and counsel has been demonstrated in such associations. Indeed, these "Women's collectives, outside male-dominated formal political structures, have been used to raise political consciousness as well as to influence official policies and practise and challenge the status quo. Over the years an increasing number of women associations has been challenging the balance of power between men and women's at both the household and community levels. Through the practical experience gained in such groups women are increasingly being empowered both socially, economically and politically. Women are slowly getting access to and control over the same type of resources such as training, property holding, exposure to international politics and economics etc. which were and are still used by men to sustain political careers.

Women have also to a small extent managed to share such resources with men through formal allocations and both policy and plans are slowly reflecting a few of women's practical and strategic needs. To a large extent therefore, the challenge for gender balancing of resource allocation owes much to the dynamic role of women's formal and informal associations. Women's informal associations and networking are not widely known although their contribution to women's political advancement is immense. Such organs have acted as power bases for consciousness raising, decision-making and action geared towards women's advancement and gender equality. These give an insight into women's oppression, exploitation and discrimination and ways of eliminating all this victimisation are increasingly being charted out. Much as these very useful associations do exist, however, most of them have tended to promote welfarism and are hence non-transformative or else pose very little challenge to the status-quo. There is, for instance,

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no grassroots - oriented initiatives focusing on advocacy and lobbying for political and legal reforms and transformation at local and higher levels. Even during this era of political pluralism and democratic process in Tanzania not much effort is being taken to exploit the space provided for more transformative political challenges. Most women, therefore, are politically conscious but largely inactive.

7. WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION UNDER MULTI-PARTY DE-MOCRACY IN TANZANIA: TWO YEARS' EXPERIENCE

The decision to re-institute multi-party democracy in Tanzania was officiated in 1991 against the background of both the democratic revolutions in the Eastern European Block and the growing dissatisfaction over CCM monopoly in governance. With the growing state of mass socio-economic and political insecurity which tended to be equated with single-party economic mismanagement, (although such instability had strong correlation with both the 1970s' global economic recession and the subsequent structural adjustment programmes), most Sub-Saharan African countries with single party political systems, Tanzania included, were faced with strong challenges for political restructuring which could hardly be ignored.

Much as criticisms of CCM monopoly existed before the 1980s, but becoming vocalised in the late 1980s, heated debates for multi-party democracy were more common during the early 1990s with mounting pressure from both the donor community and local critics, who were pushing for more structural changes in governance. Contributing to this rich political history, Booth et al (1992) informs thus;

> On two notable occasions, the issue of multipartism was debated inconclusively and the process of political liberalisation threatened to stall. On both occasions the issue was resolved in favour of abolishing the CCM monopoly through constitutional reform by personal interventions from the now retired but far from uninfluential Julius Nyerere, the man largely responsible for installing the principles of "one-party democracy" in Tanzania in the 1960s. As a result, the required constitutional amendments were passed with a respectable majority by Parliament in early 1992, and half a dozen new political parties applied for registration under the new rules...in mid 1992.

The push for political reforms was further legitimized after the announcement of the famous Nyalali report of 1991 and subsequent research reports whose interpretation led to the choice for multi-party democracy, although the majority of Tanzanians had wished

to remain with a single-party system, but not necessarily with CCM. But even in this very important reformist decision-making, the involvement of women was very minimal. As Booth et al (1992) correctly reports:

> The (Nyalali) commission found it very difficult to get women to attend and vote at all; but of those who did, nearly fourteen times as many wanted to keep the existing system while for men in mainland Tanzania the rate was 4 times for those supporting continuation of existing political system.

Currently more than 12 political parties exist in Tanzania. They include CHADEMA, UDP, CUF, TPP, NCCR - MAGEUZI, TLP, TADEA, PONA, NRA, UMD and CCM. The gender pattern of the current political processes in Tanzania is not well documented. However, the little information available will suffice to make general statements. As noted above, commissions were set up at the initial stages of this process and seminars/conferences were organized to discuss the changes. The Nyalali Commission was among the first formal attempts to collect opinions of the masses on the proposed political changes. It is not surprising that less than 20% of its members were women. As for the grassroots respondents, the scenario has been adequately discussed above. Suffice it to say that the commissioners had difficulty reaching the female gender, probably due to the fact that most of the commissioners were men and hence could not reach women as easily as female commissioners would have done.

8. EFFORTS ALREADY TAKEN IN EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN TANZANIA.

Since the restoration of multi-party politics in Tanzania in April 1992 a number of events has taken place geared towards empowering the masses and leaders for effective participation. Among such events are conferences, seminars, radio programmes, training for capacity building, publications and general political sensitization, the duration of such fora ranges from one to four days while topics covered include Democracy, Human Rights and Gender, Interpretation of the Current Political reforms (Mageuzi) and how gender equity can be assured under the current political system. Analysis of most of these fora point out to the fact that women are continually being marginalised in various respects. A few concrete examples will suffice to support this contention.

* At the International Conference held in Bonn, Germany, from 1 - 3 June 1992, under the theme Democracy in Africa - `A New Beginning? more than 200 politicians, experts and representatives of national and International organizations participated. The three official representatives from Tanzania were all men.

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At the national conference organized by the Faculty of Law in Dar es Salaam for the Chairpersons of Political Parties and experts in politics, not a single female chairperson was present although TADEP has a female chairperson. As for the participants, less than 5% were women.

At the international conference organized by the Eastern and Southern African Universities Research Programme (ESAURP) on Leadership Education, less than 10% of the participants were women. This tendency of female marginalisation has been noted in all the gender neutral conferences and seminars organized locally and internationally, to the extent that the female gender had to sit down and chart out new strategies for women's effective involvement.

One such strategy is to organize workshops and seminars specifically for the female gender. Various women pressure groups from female academicians, local NGOs and political parties took the initiative and are organizing such fora. One such pressure group is that of the female members of Chama Cha Demokrasia and Maendeleo (CHADEMA) which organized a national workshop in February 1994 bringing together women from interested political parties for political sensitization and upgrading of their leadership skills. The workshop aimed at giving women a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences and an introduction to electoral politics and procedures together with other pertinent strategies necessary for winning elections. Specific issues covered included: electoral laws and procedures, the art of public speaking, fund-raising techniques and resource management and campaign strategies etc. Similarly, the female academicians' pressure groups such as the one based at the Institute of Development Studies (IDS Gender Cluster) took early initiatives and mobilized funds from donor agencies which facilitated the organization of a one day workshop in each of the three districts of Dar es Salaam region in June 1994. During these three workshops women from all walks of life and from the different political affiliations were given the opportunity to discuss multi-party democracy, the interpretation of "Mageuzi" and strategies for effective political participation. Very constructive ideas on women's involvement in the parliament and related decision-making processes were discussed. Women also pointed out the need to have more civic education and leadership training. Participants' interpretation of 'Mageuzi" was very illuminating as it touched on both economic empowerment, leadership issues, democracy and human rights. This interpretation echoed what Booth (1992:96) vehemently pointed out thus:

> Political reform should not be understood as necessarily implying national elections and multiparty politics.....registration of new parties may look a good way of breaking the developmental logjam created by single-party rule in....Tanzania but.....can not be considered guaranteed that the out-

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come of this process will in fact deliver the sort of political changes...that are most required developmentally.....the main thing that matters to rural people....might be the sorts of more limited political change that would add voice and effectiveness to "civil society" that is, to social organisations that are capable of imposing some degree of "discipline" on state institutions by pressure from without".

In another women's conference organised by the intellectual female community of the University of Dar es Salaam in July 1994 and held at the University Campus, Dar es Salaam, female representatives from the different political parties operating in Tanzania were mobilized from all the 24 regions of Tanzania to discuss multi-party democracy and gender equity. It was in this conference that the idea to set up a National Women's Council (Baraza la Wanawake Tanzania-BAWATA) which will unite all Tanzanian women regardless of their political affiliation was further discussed. A common strategy on setting up this Council was adopted and a national committee of 10 people was set up to work on details of the proposed Council. Indeed this proposal was unanimously accepted by both the eleven Chairpersons of the political parties operating in Tanzania today, government representatives including the minister for Community Development, Women and Children Affairs and all the conference participants who agreed also to discuss this issue with the rest of the women in the country after their return to their respective homes before launching the Council. Already some work is being done to ensure the launching of the Council in the near future.

Efforts for women's empowerment in the process of democratisation include radio programmes, some of which are also sponsored by donor agencies and organized by both female NGOs and the government machineries. The IDS Gender Cluster, in collaboration with Radio Tanzania, have initiated one such programme which is still on going, and both women and men are invited to discuss issues on democracy, economics, politics, "Mageuzi" and gender.

Newsletters and other publications are other enriching avenues for sensitization on political issues. Since the restoration of multi-party politics in Tanzania in April 1992, the political situation has slightly changed to accommodate more freedom of expression, association and assembly not only for political parties but also for various interest groups. The increase in the number of registered political parties has also been complemented by increased press freedom which is now assured in Tanzania, and there is an increase in the range of newspapers available such as WATU, MAJIRA, WAKATI, MWANANCHI, RAI, Business Times and Family Mirror instead of just the four former national newspapers which have dominated for a long time i.e Daily News, Uhuru, Mfanyakazi

and Mzalendo. This has allowed all people to have different avenues to air their views. What is interesting is that not many women are using the space created to air their views. This is not surprising, however, because article writing is not the conventional women's way of expressing their views. They are probably using other avenues such as women's groups through which they are also lobbying very hard to have their voices heard, especially in matters related to gender equity and social justice.

Since 1992, women's lobbying groups and opposition parties have been busy mobilizing women to start preparing themselves for participation in the forthcoming local government councillors' and parliamentary elections. The question of representation is more crucial than ever. Most womens' groups and pressure groups have been working hard brainstorming on how to get women representatives to fill the 25% female representation in local government. More work is under way to chart out strategies of filling the currently provided 15% parliamentary seats as allocated to the female gender. The strategy of sensitising women who are the majority voters, is going to be very effective in making them more conscious of the power of their vote and the advantages and merits of casting their votes for either committed women candidates or parties which can offer a well defined women's agenda in their policies and programmes of action. Experiences from the few bi-elections for MPs held so far are indicative of the need to increase such sensitization programmes as a way of minimizing possibilities for women voters to be bought out by unscrupulous leaders who take advantage of women's poor economic status and dish out consumables such as sugar or pairs of khangas or use other manipulative strategies just to win women's votes.

Another strategy which is being used by the women pressure groups is to encourage and build self-confidence in eligible women candidates through training in necessary leadership skills, political will and commitment to be able to contest for leadership positions in the forthcoming councillors and the 1995 parliamentary elections. The ESAURP office and the IDS Gender Cluster's efforts in working on leadership education programmes are but a few such attempts for women's political empowerment. Further similar efforts need to be encouraged and supported.

It is our hope that participants at this Conference on Empowerment of Women in the Democratic Process will use this opportunity to share their own experiences on the current political processes taking place in Eastern African countries and, even more so, on the strategies which will ensure women more effective political participation. The environment is indeed favourable for women to refuse to be "passengers" (abiria) in politics and to resume the driver's seat in partnership with men.

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ABBREVIATIONS:

UWT:	Umoja wa Wanawake Tanzania
CHADEMA:	Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo
UDP:	United Democratic Party
CUF:	Civic United Front
TPP:	Tanzania Peoples Party
NCCR-Mageuzi:	National Covention for Construction and Reform - Mageuzi.
TLP:	Tanzania Labour Party
TADEA:	Tanzania Democratic Association
PONA:	Popular National Party
NRA:	National Reconstruction Alliance
UMD:	United Movement for Democracy
CCM:	Chama cha Mapinduzi

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EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE IN KENYA: WHICH WAY FORWARD?

Dr. Maria Nzomo

1. INTRODUCTION

"Democracy is more than a legalistic or formal process. Democracy is more than the ritual casting of a ballot at one party or multi-party elections. True democracy involves participatory democracy by the people at all levels so that the people have a voice in the discussions by which they are governed. It must be realized in the form of people's empowerment and participation at the grassroots and other levels with responsible and accountable processes and institutions at both the local and national levels. It demands good governance, freedom from corruption, and accountability of state and other authorities to the people. It involves the protection and participation of those groups which are not in the majority, namely minorities and disempowered groups" (Our Voice: Bangkok 1993).

For the 29 years or so of post-colonial rule in Kenya prior to the return to multi-partism in December 1991, women's struggles for democracy and human rights had largely been ineffective in empowering them. In my view, the major factors contributing to this ineffectiveness included, on the one hand, a series of autocratic governments, characterized, inter alia, by manipulative tendencies, intolerance, harassment and muzzling of interest and lobby groups that did not support the status quo and, on the other hand, an underdeveloped economy, built upon a highly patriarchal society with high illiteracy rates, especially of women, with extremely low levels of gender, civic and legal rights' awareness. Despite this, the women's movement has persisted and grown and women's participation and determination to influence democratic change in Kenya has increased in the 1990's. Furthermore, concrete strategies for women's empowerment are now on the democratic agenda. This paper reviews the progress made thus far in advancing the status of women in Kenya and then suggests strategies for women's empowerment in the post 1992 multiparty election era.

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2. WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRATIC CHANGE: COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL ERA [1]

The women of Kenya, as elsewhere on the African continent, have a long history (dating back to the pre-colonial era) of exercising their freedom of association and assembly within the context of their women's groups and organizations. Indeed, the women's group tradition is the most dominant and the most deep rooted form of women's movement in Kenya. Other forms of organizations such as trade unionism, and cooperatives are of post-colonial origin and have never attracted significant women's membership or activism to a comparable level as women's groups. The former movements remain a male domain, whille the latter have entirely or predominantly female participation. But in the past women have not used the spaces afforded by these

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1.   For a more detailed review of the women's movement in Kenya, see M. Nzomo, "The Kenya Women's movement in A Changing Political Context" in Khasianu & Njiro (eds). The Women's Movement in Kenya High-Tech Computer Applics Agencies, Nairobi 1993, pp. 131 - 149.

groups as lobbying forums for influencing policy and institutional changes in their favour, especially in regard to matters of women's democratic and human rights.

This has been despite women's participation in the colonial liberation struggle, and the post colonial rapid growth of the women's group movement in Kenya. As already stated a combination of undemocratic political environment, state coptation and manipulation of women's groups, class and intra-class leadership rivalries as well as the social-welfarist ideology of most women's organizations, have in the past crippled the performance of the women's movement in matters of women's empowerment. Indeed, the one striking feature of the women's movement in Kenya in the post-colonial era has not merely been its rapid expansion in terms of numbers of registered organizations, but also the close control and influence the state has exercised over that expansion as well as in shaping the structure and the type of activities the women's groups engage in. There was, therefore, a close correlation between the periods of rapid expansion of women's organizations and the government's policy and institutional interventions in it. These interventions in turn gave the government enough space to manipulate and shape the direction of the women's movement.

Those women's organizations or individuals within them that resisted state control and/ or challenged the oppressive status quo, often came under heavy censure and harassment, while the acquiescent ones were rewarded and accorded high official status. (Nzomo 1988:11).

Gender based discrimination against Kenyan women in almost every aspect of life, remained rampant throughout the single party era. No women' lobby groups emerged to challenge this oppressive status quo. Gender based discrimination in law and practice remained in place on such matters as: **inheritance, marriage and divorce, custody and maintenance of children and employment related benefits** such as housing allowance for married women in public service and maternity leave. Discriminatory practices and punitive action for women and girls who fell pregnant while undergoing government sponsored educational programmes, physical and psychological violence against women and the manipulation of religious, common and customary laws to deny women their basic rights on such issues as burial rights are but a few examples that demonstrate the powerlessness and the suppressed nature of the womenfolk in the country and the pervasiveness of patriarchy and male chauvinism in Kenyan society. This scenario was sustained throughout the women's decade, at least up to the end of 1991, the date of the country's return to multipartism.

However, during the ten years' duration of the Women's Decade (1975 - 1985) the Kenyan Government adopted a Women In Development (WID) policy position and created and/or promoted national machineries to develop and coordinate programmes

for women. This action was merely a compliance with the 1975 United Nation's resolutions that demanded of all member states to make changes and introduce policies and programmes geared towards accelerated advancement of women, by specially creating national machineries to serve women and strengthen the existing organizations. Hence, long after the end of the women's decade, government action on the women question remained at the level of high sounding rhetoric, consisting of sweeping and vaguely worded statements of commitment and intent on WID, quite unrelated to the actual gender situation in the country. (Nzomo 1989 [b]).

The immediate outcome of the women's decade was the global policy document: **The 1985 Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies** to which the Kenya government is a signatory. Raised gender awareness also resulted from the sitting of the 1985 Women's Decade Conference in Nairobi. Furthermore, the women's decade contributed to the rapid proliferation of women's groups and organizations that rose from 4,300 groups with a total membership of 156,892 in 1976, to 16,500 groups with a total membership of 630,000 by 1984, and to about 23,000 women groups with 1.4 million members by early 1988. Thereafter, few groups have been formed and group membership seem to have slightly declined so that by 1991, there were 23,514 groups with 968,941 members[2]. However, research into the activities and performance of these organizations has revealed that they did not succeed in empowering women (Nzomo: 1987 [b]). Government interference in their activities, especially the cooptation of top women group leaders, and the social welfare orientation of these organizations, conspired to make them toothless bulldogs. The powerlessness of women in Kenya has further been compounded by their gross under-representation in key decision making positions, before, during and after the women's decade.

3. THE MARGINALISATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICS AND OTHER PUBLIC DECISION MAKING POSITIONS

Many examples abound on the marginalisation of women in public decision making positions in Kenya. In the **Judiciary,** for example, where there are almost as many women with University Law Degrees as men, by June 1994, thirty years after independence, only **five** out of a total of **thirty five** high court judges were women. No woman to date is a member of the most supreme court in Kenya - the **Court of Appeal,** despite there being some vacant positions and there has never been a woman Chief Justice. Furthermore, it was only in 1983 that for the first time, two women were appointed to head two of the many public parastatals in the country. But it was not until after the end

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2.   Republic of Kenya, Economic Survey Government Printer, Nairobi, 1993:195, see also, Mazingira Institute, Women & Development: A Kenya Guide, 1992:11

of the Women's Decade (1986 - 1987) that most of the presidential appointments of women in key **public sector** positions were made: Public Parastatals (15), Diplomatic Positions (2), Permanent Secretary 3(1), (Daily Nation January 17, 1986: 1 & Daily Nation June 2, 1987:1).

No major appointments have been made since. Instead, some women heads of public parastatals have subsequently been dethroned. In the **security and armed forces sector**, women have never risen to high levels of military hierarchy, such as the position of Commander of any of the three branches of the armed forces. Similarly, no woman has ever risen even to the level of a Senior Deputy Commissioner of Police. Only one woman thus far holds the position an Assistant Commissioner of Police, which is two ranks from the top. In the powerful **state run provincial administration**, most women in this sector occupy the relatively powerless position of Divisional Officer (D.O.), a position straddled between the powerful position of the Locational Chiefs and subchiefs who are invariably all men and the District Commissioners (D.C.'s), and Provincial Commissioners (P.C.'s) who have always been men. Indeed, in the entire civil service, women in senior decision making capacities comprise only about 9% of the total todate.

In the arena of **electoral politics** women's participation in the legislature and civic authorities has also remained **marginal** despite the female gender comprising the majority of voters. It was only in November 1969, six years after independence, that the first woman was elected into the National Assembly and one more was nominated to parliament, along with eleven male nominated members. Since then, the total elected women members of parliament have on the average been two out of a total parliamentary body ranging from about 160 - 188 elected members. For example by 1991, out of 200 elected and nominated members of parliament, there were only two women elected MPs. Of the two women MPs, only one sat on the front3 bench as Assistant Minister for Culture and Social Services, along with 69 men assistant ministers. Indeed, since 1974, when the first woman was appointed to the front bench, the position of an assistant minister is the highest position a woman has ever held in Kenya's National Assembly. Furthermore, there has never been more than one woman holding this post at any one time. More significantly, the lone woman assistant minister has consistently been appointed to serve in the "soft" Ministry of Culture and Social Services.[3]

In local/civic politics, women's representation in decision making has also remained marginal during the 30 years since Kenya attained independence. To date, there ha3ve only been four women who have risen to the position of Mayor. Currently (1994), despite

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3.   In the 7th Multi-party parliament, the one woman Assistant Minister was initially appointed to serve in the Ministry of Culture and Social Services but was later transferred to the Ministry of Work.

the restoration of multi-party politics, there is only one woman Mayor and one woman town clerk out of 34 Mayors and Town Clerks, although there are3 50 women councillors, in a country with over 137 civic authorities.

Within the ruling (KANU) party hierarchy, women have had even more difficulty participating at the national executive level; save for the lone woman who has since 1989, held the position of Director of Women and Youth Affairs at the ruling party secretariat and one woman party branch chair elected in early 1992 who has since left KANU for one of the opposition parties - Democratic Party (DP). Indeed, women's status in political party hierarchy has consistently been relegated to that of mere rank and file members or officials of the powerless Women's wings.

Despite this marginalisation of women in public decision making positions, one would still expect the few women in key positions to effectively use that platform to influence national policies in a manner that benefits other women who have no such facility. In this regard, there was no evidence of such action by the end of 1991. None of the women in Key positions had, for example, ever made an appeal to the government to remove the large body of legislation that discriminates against women. Perhaps, because most of these women leaders had been presidential appointees in a single party political system, they feared victimization that could result from being critical of government legislation and practice, especially when they as individuals were beneficiaries of the political system. Furthermore, they must have been aware of the various instances where the government had issued stern warnings to women leaders who had tried to make very modest demands to the government in favour of other women (Nzomo: 1987). As for the token women in a male dominated parliament, their numbers clearly worked against any efforts they may have made in pushing for gender related policy changes.

However, since the restoration of multi-party politics in December 1991, the political situation has changed significantly enough to accommodate some freedom of expression, association and assembly, of not only political parties, but also various interest groups with a vested interest in the new democratization agenda. Indeed, women in 1992 became the most vocal pressure group in lobbying for gender equity and social justice, especially in matters of political empowerment as explained in the next section.

4. WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MULTI-PARTY POLITICS IN KENYA: THE UNFINISHED WOMEN'S AGENDA

In the 1992 preparatory period for the first multi-party elections in Kenya, a high premium was placed on political empowerment as a means of achieving other goals associated with the advancement of the status of women. This was in the hope that if

women attained key political decision making capacities in large enough numbers, they would, for example, exert a decisive influence to ensure the removal or repeal of laws that discriminate against women at the social and economic levels and they would participate in designing development policies that would mainstream, rather than marginalize and disempower women. Consequently from January 1992, women's lobby groups and organizations embarked on a mobilizing and strategising campaign to ensure that in the December 29th 1992 General, Civic and Parliamentary and Presidential Elections, women candidates won the maximum possible number of parliamentary and civic seats. The target was set at 30 - 35% of the total seats.

One basic strategy employed to achieve this goal was to sensitize and conscientize women who are the majority of voters, on the power of the vote and the merits of casting their votes for committed women rather than for gender insensitive men. The other related strategy employed was to encourage and build confidence in those women with the necessary political will and commitment to contest for political office in the December 1992 elections. Toward this end, a National Women's Convention, bringing together women from the grassroots to the national level, was held in February 1992 to chart out the women's agenda and in July 1992, the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) organized a national training workshop for capacity building of women candidates, bringing together about 60 women candidates who had already declared their intention to contest for political office.

In the meantime, some women's lobby groups and organizations, notably, the NCSW, League of Women Voters, Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Association of African Women for Research & Development (AAWORD) conducted grassroot civic education programmes, gender and legal rights' awareness campaigns, using the medium of training workshops, seminars, the media, posters, and other relevant printed materials. NCSW further monitored the general elections as an accredited observer body, and gave moral and material support to women candidates throughout the campaign process until the completion of the electoral process.

The achievements of an entire year of advocacy, mobilizing and enhancing gender awareness, as well as the civic and legal rights' campaign, produced the following outcome:

- Over 250 women stood for civic and parliamentary seats in the December 1992 elections, which was more than a 100% increase from previous elections.

- Despite the numerous obstacles women candidates faced during the electoral process, ranging from harassment, intimidation and discrimination within parties,

financial shortfalls, mass rigging and other electoral irregularities, six women won parliamentary seats and about 45 were elected Councillors. In this respect, women have proved their political tenacity and their determination to penetrate the male dominated political hierarchy with or without affirmative action. Indeed, if the electoral process had provided a level political playing field and if elections were truly free and fair, there is no reason why more women would not have won civic and parliamentary seats.[4]

Participants of the Conference

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4.   For more detailed analysis of the Gender dimension of the multiparty elections in Kenya, see, M. Nzomo, "The Unfinished Democracy: Gender Dimension of the 1992 Multiparty Elections in Kenya." A paper presented at a National Workshop on: Transition to Multi party Democracy: A Study of Multiparty Elections in Kenya The Place, Nairobi 19 - 20 August 1993

The modest number of women elected into political office in the December 199
elections was an important political achievement, but it fell short of the original objectiv
of attaining 30 - 35 percent female representation in parliament and appointment t
powerful cabinet positions. Furthermore, outside the political arena many of the gende
concerns women identified and lobbied for still remain on the drawing board. Discrimi
nation against women in existing laws and practices is still in place, as are the negativ
images and various forms of violence against women which are on the increase despit
protestation from some women activists. Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS
have had the most devastating effect on women and children, who have borne the major
burden of government cutbacks on social expenditure, health, education and employ-
ment. The economic crisis has not only resulted in the enhanced economic marginalisatior
of women and the feminization of poverty, it has also made networking among women
more difficult, as it has diminished the time available to women to organize, attend
meetings and implement empowerment strategies. (Nzomo: 1992 ; 1994). The impact
of SAPS, coupled with bad governance characterized by authoritarianism and corrup-
tion, threatens women's new found capacity to struggle for their rights and to mobilize
for democratic change. Indeed, it seems in many respects that women in Kenya have not
made significant progress and most issues of gender concern have yet to be addressed.

Nevertheless, the point that needs to be underscored here is that the Women's Movement
in Kenya put up a remarkable pressure for women's political empowerment and the
respect of women's human rights in 1992. The six women in parliament, the largest
number of women ever in Kenya's parliament, owe their electoral victory as much to
their own efforts and competence, as to the tremendous lobbying and support they
received from women's groups during the electoral process. But in the post-election era,
the women's movement appears to be loosing steam, as are other civic groups in the
current political environment. As for the six women MPs, even if the political
environment was right, there are still too few to influence gender sensitive policy changes
in a 200 member parliament.

Consequently, while women's voices in the civil society continue to be audible in the
post-election era, they are not as loud and forceful as they were during the election year.
Women are no longer for instance, issuing threats to gender insensitive policy makers.
A combination of the repressive political environment, with the election fatigue and
disappointment with the 5election outcome, have led many women activists to retreat to
the less politically overt but strategically empowering activities of civic education and
gender awareness raising.

But, because women in Kenya and Africa in general, suffer more than other vulnerable groups from multiple sources of discrimination and denial of rights - in the family, economy and law, they have more reason to persist in exploiting whatever political spaces are available to push for democratic change. Some women's organizations are still making some attempts to sustain the political momentum of 1992 - notably, the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) - Kenya Chapter, and the Anti-Rape Organization. Most of the large umbrella women's organizations have, on the other hand, since diverted their attention to the global preparations for the International Women Conferences in Dakar (October 1994) and Beijing (1995).

Other women leaders have been assigned by the Attorney General the rather challenging task of reviewing all laws (Statutory, Customary and Religious) that relate to women, with a view to recommending to the government necessary changes that can promote the Status of Women.[5]

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5.   The Task Force on Laws Relating to Women is at one level a very significant and positive development.   Bust seen within the framework of the government's piecemeal strategy of reforming the Constitution through Task Forces, there is reason to doubt whether the recommendations that will come out of this and other Task Forces, in the first instance will be implemented, and even then, whether such uncoordinated amendments can constitute an adequate constitutional reform.

Given this background of hope and disillusionment in the struggle for women's rights in Kenya, in the period up to the 1992 elections, it is pertinent to project beyond 1992, and reflect on some of the strategies for moving forward the next section attempts to do that.

Participants of the Conference

5. BEYOND THE 1992 MULTIPARTY ELECTIONS: WHICH WAY FORWARD?

Before embarking on identifying strategies for women's empowerment, it is important to first identify the major structural barriers that obstruct women's participation in public life and the governance process as well as the agents of democratic development. These include socio-cultural, educational, legislative, institutional and policy factors, which we briefly elaborate on below.

One of the most important barriers to participation and advancement of women in public life is the socio-cultural beliefs ad value system, which form the socialization process and

the gender education and training most men and women are exposed to from childhood. The sex stereotypes and gender segregation in employment and allocation of roles in private and public life are primarily a product of the early socialization process and the indoctrination of the societal environment. Women's low self esteem and lack of confidence in their ability to competently execute public leadership roles, largely arise from this socialization for subordination. This is hardly surprising given that, socio-culturally, the most dominant gender ideology in Africa, as in many parts of the world, is patriarchy, on the basis of which social relations in general and gender relations in particular are structured and practised. It is because of its pervasive oppressiveness that patriarchy has been termed by one report as a form of slavery that is a violation of human rights (Our Voice: 1993)

At the economic level, customary practices trample on women's economic rights, confer on men the ultimate authority over household resources, as well as over his wife and children. This patriarchal ideology of male control and exercise of power and authority over women in the private economic domain is reproduced in public life. Another aspect of the socio-cultural constraint to women's participation in high level decision making takes the forms of multiple roles.

African socio-cultural traditions tend to assume that women's public roles are secondary and are just an additional activity to their "primary" (domestic) roles (Stitcher and Parpart, 1990, A. Imam et al 1985; Boserup: 1970 and B.J. Dorsey et al., 1989). Even where support services exist, they do not alter the existing unequal gender division of labour. Because of the multiple roles women play, the majority of those who participate in politics or gender activism are either single women (without husband care) or married but with grown up children.

Kenya has an extremely "backward political culture" (Muigai: 1993:32). In gender relations, this political backwardness manifests itself especially in the patriarchal dominance of institutions of governance. The evidence is glaring, as already shown in an earlier section. Indeed, the political experience of the 1992 general elections in Kenya showed that many of the women candidates who did not make it to polling day or did not win the elections were victims of male dominated political party machineries and retrogressive socio-cultural attitudes, that combined to treat women as second class candidates, who could easily be sacrificed in favor of male candidates (Nzomo and Kibwana eds. 1993 (b) 97 - 116). At best, women were expected to be highly courageous and self-confident and to prove themselves better than men in order to gain even a small measure of acceptability. At worst, women candidates and their supporters were intimidated, harassed, subjected to extremely humiliating forms of abuse, and in some cases, even raped.

In addition to male hostility and unwillingness to share power with women, the female socialization process does not generally prepare them for "cut-throat" politics. Furthermore, women candidates are unlikely to be wealthy in their own right, given the patriarchal property ownership and employment hindrances. Consequently, women may be unable to display the same kind and levels of aggressiveness and patronage as fellow male candidates (Nzomo 1987, 123)

Apart from the socio-cultural factor, the other constraints to women's participation in decision making include:

- **Educational Constraints** including inadequate quantity and quality of education for women to enable them to compete effectively with men for job opportunities and top decision making positions.

- **Legislative Framework**, whereby even when the law provides for desirable benefits for women and girls, customary law and social practices continue to perpetuate the discrimination and subordinate status of females and to deny them their basic human rights, even creating barriers for their effective participation in public life.

- **Institutional and Policy Framework**, whereby the women's national machinery is **underfunded, structurally weak** and ineffective in advancing the status of women. Furthermore, there is no systematic Gender and Development (GAD) policy. The government has also resisted the mainstreaming of gender concerns in the National Development Policies and Programmes.

Having identified the major barriers to women's participation, the next challenge for women in Kenya in the post election period, has been to devise practical and workable strategies that will empower them in all sectors. These strategies are based on the fundamental premise that women are involved in a power struggle. The men wielding power and control over women do so with abandon because they do not "see" any real power from women challenging them. Hence, strategies for women's empowerment have to be aimed at strengthening the women's power base, which in turn can put women in a stronger position to make demands in those areas where their advancement depends on their ability to prevail upon men to do what they might otherwise not do for women. In other words, when women demand that the government repeal or amend certain laws that discriminate against them, the extent to which that demand will e met is to a large extent dependent on the government's perception of the political, social, or economic cost of failure to comply with that demand. The perceived cost to date is politically insignificant.

In other words, reliance on government action, therefore, on its benevolence and good faith may not prove very useful in attaining women's empowerment. Women need, therefore, to seek autonomous channels of empowering themselves which are independent of government. Thereafter, if women attain a certain amount of self empowerment, they may be in a position to negotiate with government to effect changes at the legislative and policy levels. Hence, any strategy requiring government action also demand, that women as individuals, groups and organizations, with support of other human rights groups in the civil society, lobby and put pressure on the government to take the necessary action. The following then are some of the strategies/actions proposed for empowering women to influence democratic change in public decision making and governance processes. Some of them are already being implemented.

Strengthening and building the capacity of women's organizations and lobby groups.

There is a need to transform potential majority power into real power. Women need to demonstrate that they have the power to achieve what they want. There is no point in celebrating being, for example, 52% of the population if women continue to succumb to the dictates of the 48% male population (as in Kenya). There is no point either having millions of women's groups all over the continent which are weak and ineffective in advancing the status of women. This then means that women must look inwardly and critically assess and rectify their major sources of weakness, especially in regard to lack of cohesion and common vision in the women's movements in Africa. Collaboration between women's organizations and lobby groups is necessary. Furthermore, the potential lobbying power of women needs to be developed through greater co-ordination of the activities of women's lobby groups. In each country, for example, there is need for a common lobbying forum for women's human rights' issues. So far, there has been a lack of sustained action with only a few scattered voices of protest from a few radical women's organizations and individuals. such voices rarely receive adequate support from the majority of women.

The other weakness in the women's movement is its failure to link urban struggles with rural struggles, where the majority of women live. This has led to the urban based women's movements being accused by a hostile state of being elitist middle class women trying to divide the people's unity under the influence of western feminism. Efforts, therefore, need to be made, especially by apex women's organizations, to extend the largely urban based women's movement to all the rural areas of each country. This is where the real power lies.

Develop Gender, Legal Awareness and Civic Education Programmes

It cannot be overemphasized that many women both in rural and urban areas of Africa fail to exercise their democratic rights in their best interest and to participate effectively in electoral politics due to illiteracy and lack of civic education and gender awareness. Furthermore, the influence and power of social-cultural attitudes and customary practices in perpetuating negative aspects of gender power relations and hence acting as a major barrier to women's political empowerment remain a major force to reckon with. Consequently, women's organizations and other non-governmental organizations should, as a matter of strategy, adopt deliberate measures aimed at institutionalizing civic education, gender and legal awareness programmes, as well as eliminating negative attitudes and social cultural practices. Gender sensitization and raising cultural awareness should be set up from the grassroots to the national level and be included in all school curricula. Human rights' groups and organizations, the media and religious organizations, should team up with women's groups in accessing and disseminating the relevant gender civic information.

Develop comprehensive support services to women's multiple roles

In order to enhance women's participation in political leadership, reduce their workload and afford them more time for political activities and skills training. Support services should include the increased establishment of day-care centers, maternal and child health services, conveniently placed and operated. This should go hand in hand with the sensitization of men on the merits of sharing domestic roles and of women to challenge the stereotyped gender division of labour and the underlying ideology that forms the basis of women's subordination to men.

Highlighting women's leadership abilities

In order to build a positive image of women as political and public decision makers. Women researchers, publishers and women in the media should make a concerted effort to highlight the contributions made by African women historically and in the contemporary era, as leaders in various capacities. Personal profiles of women who have distinguished themselves in public life should also become a common feature of the print media. A case in point is the profiles of women candidates in Kenya, which highlighted their leadership abilities during the 1992 election year. These profiles boosted the images and significantly improved both the candidate's desirability to the target voters and their winning chances (Nzomo and Kibwana: 1993).

Effective utilization of civic positions for training and recruiting of women for national politics.

Globally, local politics still functions as an important training ground and recruitment base for national politics. In this respect, local government is perhaps more crucial for women than for men, because women more than men are likely to be political novices. Women councillors should be encouraged to take pride in the civic positions they hold and to utilize these positions to prepare to contest for higher national political offices in future elections. Women councillors should also strive to hold key decision making positions such as mayorship and chairpersons of the various civic committees in local authorities.

Political parties controlled by women

The experience from countries such as the Scandinavian ones, that have experimented with parties led by women shows that such parties normally emerge as a form of protest against the exclusion of women from representation in male dominated political bodies. Such parties, therefore, emerge to challenge the patriarchal system and the established male dominated party structures (E.H. Mannila et al [eds]. 1985: 43 - 48). They are also a manifestations of the difficulty faced by women who are committed to social change in countries where male party politics has become a kind of tribalism with a high degree of insensitivity towards the disadvantaged groups, especially women. The experience of the 1992 General Elections in Kenya clearly showed that many of the women candidates who did not make it to polling day were, among other things, victims of male dominated political party machineries. Because of women's marginalization in male dominated political parties, women politicians may benefit from initiating themselves political parties with a gender sensitive but broad based ideology, structured to address not only women's issues, such as poverty, the environment, class exploitation and various forms of inequalities and human rights violations etc. But such a political party would have the distinction of having women at the helm of its leadership. However, membership and recruitment to the said party should be from both genders. Most importantly, it would form the basis of recruiting and supporting future women candidates who find it difficult to compete in male dominated parties. The idea of women's initiated political parties has already been suggested in Kenya (Nzomo: 1993) and is gaining currency in other African countries, for example Uganda (Tamale, 1993:17), Nigeria and South Africa, where there are two parties initiated by women.

But forming a viable political party is not an easy task. The institutionalization of such a party and the mobilization of human and material resources and recruitment of members is likely to be a mammoth task which requires proper planning over a period

of years. If the experience of some of the new opposition parties formed at the beginning of the multi-party era in Kenya is anything to go by, the planning should start at least four years ahead of next general elections in each country.

- Lobby for the separate and different treatment of gender issues from those of the youth and children in development planning and programming, so as to accord full recognition and attention to the needs of each social category.

- Lobby for mainstreaming, not tokenism on issues of gender concern, including: (i) greater government allocation of its budget on programmes that directly benefit women, and (ii) setting up a women's desk in all government ministries and other public bodies to monitor the implementation of the statements of intent contained in government policy documents, and ensure the women's agenda is mainstreamed.

- Networking and building alliances not only among women's groups, but also with non-gender specific human rights' groups and gender sensitive men who are genuinely committed to the advancement of the status of women, in order to broaden and strengthen the support base of the women's struggle against patriarchy and autocracy.

Legal Strategies

Legal obstacles to women's advancement are closely intertwined with the political, economic, and social status of women. Indeed, it is the existing laws that give legitimacy to the economic, political and social practices that are often used to discriminate against women. Legal strategies for empowering women must then seek: (i) to reform or repeal those laws that discriminate against women; (ii) to enforce the existing beneficial laws that could serve women well if implemented; and (iii) to institutionalize legal awareness' programmes in order to empower women with knowledge of their rights under the existing laws. The implementation of those strategies will vary from country to country depending on the existing constitutional framework already in place. But broadly speaking, repeal or amendment should include the following:

- The explicit outlawing of discrimination on the basis of gender and sex.

- **Family Law** - the harmonization of the co-existing and often contradictory customary, Christian, Hindu and Islamic Laws, that often have the effect of impinging on women's rights in regard to matters of marriage, divorce, custody of children, matrimonial property etc.

- **Law of Succession Act 1981** - the protection and guarantee of women's rights on all matters of inheritance.

- **Employment Act** - the removal of existing discrimination against women and violation of women's human rights on matters relating to terms and conditions of employment and sexual harassment in the public and private sector.

- **Independent Candidates Electoral Amendment** - the possibility of contesting for political office without being required to be nominated by a political party. This would assist women who would otherwise wish to vie for political office, but do not want or cannot find a suitable political party.

- **Political Quota System** - to ensure that from the nominees to parliament and civic positions, at least half should be women and the total female percentage should be at least 30 percent of the total parliamentary and civic members.

- The review of all laws relating to violence against women and girls, with the view or providing stiff minimum sentence for rape (within and outside marriage) and all other forms of violence against women and girls, including defilement, incest, battery, sexual harassment and derogatory language.

- The provision and establishment in the national constitutions of a permanent Commission on Gender Equity, to regularly review and monitor the implementation of gender related laws.

Institutional and Policy Strategies

- Given the historic disadvantage in the educational situation of women and girls in scientific and technical fields, African governments should review the educational programmes already in place, with a view to removing gender stereotypes in school textbooks, curricula, etc. in order to increase the participation and performance of females in these subjects. This would in turn enhance their employability and upward mobility to top decision making positions in the public sector.

- Recognizing the existing gender disparities in public and private sector employment, employers in this sector should utilize and promote measures for guaranteeing equity and fairness in accessing to women employment opportunities, including the adoption of quotas as appropriate. In addition, employers should regularly review the terms of service for women in the public and private sectors to ensure that they enjoy equal terms and conditions of work, maternity leave with pay, housing and medical allowances.

Given the inadequacy of gender disaggregated data on women's status in Africa, academic and training institutions should support and create adequate facilities, as well support comprehensive research data collection to ensure the disaggregation by gender of all development data as appropriate. Such support should include the setting up of Gender Studies Programmes at the Universities and other institutions of higher learning in each country, as well as positive recognition and support of those scholars engaged in gender based research.

6.   CONCLUSION

In this paper we have focused mainly on the participation of women in democratic struggles in Kenya. We have also discussed some of the strategies that may yield greater empowerment for women in the future. From the above analysis it is quite clear that, although progress has been slow in the empowerment of women, some gains have been made and some lessons learnt in the process.

Among the lessons learnt is the realization among women that, regardless of their religious, class, professional, ethnic or political party affiliations, they share common gender based oppressions. In Kenya, two national Women's Conventions held in 1992 and 1993 brought this realization to the fore, as women across party divides, poor and rich, urban and rural "discovered" how similar their woes and tribulations are, as well as their aspirations and visions for the future. Violence against women, for example, was found to cut across class, race, ethnic and other boundaries.

With increased communication and sharing of experiences, women in Kenya are changing their perceptions of themselves as victims and beginning to appreciate themselves as active agents of change with formidable power that can be mobilized, through unity in diversity. Women are, therefore, more conscious of the importance of gender solidarity as a strategy for empowerment.

Women are also learning to use the political spaces afforded by the new wave of the democratization struggles of the 1990s, and the multi-party political environment, to lobby and demand the upholding of their human rights, removal of gender based oppression and restoration of their autonomy. In Kenya there are now many more female voices of defiance and resistance in 1994 than in 1991; of young girls refusing forced marriages or genital mutilation; of women rejecting male control over their sexuality; and of women speaking out on violence against them, and demanding appropriate redress. Gender sensitization, legal awareness and civic education programmes are now on the agendas of many women's organization's programmes. This is a significant step forward from the pre-multi-party era, when the programmes of most women's organi-

zations focussed on social welfare needs for improving family nutrition, shelter, clothing and child welfare, and completely neglected strategic empowerment concerns.

While multipartism in the 1990s has opened new political spaces for women of Kenya, and enhanced their capacity to exert pressure and engage in dialogue with each other and society at large, it has also increased awareness of the fact that incursions at the formal level of politics do not necessarily guarantee that women's rights will suddenly acquire priority on a predominantly man-made agenda. Women are learning the hard way that they cannot expect male dominated party politics to create space for gender issues. Women, therefore, need to explore and initiate alternative political spaces for their issues, within their organizations and in newly formed groups and activities.

In Kenya, as in many African countries, women's struggles are, however, still taking place in undemocratic contexts despite multipartism. In most African countries, democratic rules of tolerance, mutual respect, accountability and transparency, and respect of basic human rights and freedoms have not yet been accepted by the major political players. This situation affords both opportunities and challenges for the advancement of the women's human rights and empowerment agenda in the 1990s and beyond.

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WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE DEMOCRATISATION PROCESS IN UGANDA

by Norah Matovu

In this paper I will mainly trace women's participation in the democratisation process in Uganda since the time of independence in 1962. It will cover both the government's efforts, NGOs and individual women's initiatives that have ensured women's participation. I will adopt the following meaning/definition for the term democracy. "Democracy is the ability of the people to participate in their own government not only by having opportunity to periodically elect their leaders but also having the same opportunity to be elected in positions of leadership at different levels of Government. Democracy entails equitable distribution of resources that enables people to have a meaningful standard of living. Respect and tolerance of one another's views and ideas irrespective of whether or not such views are similar are also necessary elements of democracy. But most important democratic systems guarantee, protect and promote the fundamental rights and freedoms of an individual so that all people live in dignity" (Matembe 1990).

I shall consider how far these attributes of democracy have applied to women in Uganda. How have they been empowered to be active and effective participants and beneficiaries? What have some of their hindrance and obstacles been? How can we improve participation? Has the democratisation process involved all women or is it only meaningful to the elite group?

Background to Uganda

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa, bordered by Sudan in the North, Zaire in the West, Kenya in the East and Tanzania and Rwanda in the South. According to the 1991 population census Ugandans population was 16.67 million, growing at an average rate of 2.5% per annum. Women constitute 50.9% of the population. About 88.7% of Ugandans population live in the countryside. 51.67% of the urban population in Uganda is female compared to 50.96% of the rural population.

Ugandans independence was obtained from its colonial masters on 9th October 1962. For over thirty years after independence, Ugandans never experienced democracy as defined above. They have lived under a reign of anarchy, characterised by dictatorships, state inspired violence, indiscriminate massacres and killings, insecurity of people and property, looting, detention without trial, and all other forms of brutality imaginable. Of course in this situation where all people suffered, women suffered even more. In the socio-cultural context of our society, where women are oppressed and treated as second

rate citizens, they were prevented from using their full potential and ability to contribute and participate in the governance of their country.

However, since 1986, when the National Resistance Movement government took over power after a five year protracted peoples' war, a fundamental change was ushered in. The government specifically stated its commitment to integrate women in the mainstream of the development process. On the 8 March 1986 at the Women's Day Celebrations, His Excellency

The President, Yoweri Museveni remarked:

> "It is acknowledged that the involvement of women in the development process is not just a matter of ethics but of good economics. The challenges of development enjoin us to pay more than just lip service to the core issues of unequal relations in our society" (New Vices on Paper, 9 March 1986).

Women as well as men had fought for peace and democracy and sacrificed their lives for better governance in Uganda. Therefore, the government could not ignore women's interests and needs after the was over. It is also committed to promoting and upholding the basic human rights of its subjects, including the rights of women for self development and emancipation, and has taken several steps to ensure that women participate actively in the process o democratisation as outlined here below:

INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND MACHINERY FOR THE ADVANCE-MENT OF WOMEN

Resistance Council Structure

In the effort to politically empower the Ugandan people, especially the women, and to promote participatory democracy through collective decision making at all levels, decentralised political authorities were established in 1987. This is called the Resistance Council (RC) System which is a six-tier structure at every administrative unit i.e. from the village, parish, sub-county, country and district levels. Through this structure the ordinary people manage and control their affairs and elect their political leaders. The participation of women in this structure is mandatory. The Resistance Council Stature of 1987 provides for a post of Secretary for women on all the nine member

Councils and committees at all the levels of the RC structure. Women also compete for all the other eight posts on the committees with men. At the National level, from each of the 39 districts in Uganda a woman representative is elected to the National Resistance Council, which is the law making organ in Uganda (Parliament). This ensures political

participation by women at local and national levels. In 1987, when the RCs were introduced, women's participation was very minimal. But with the sensitisation campaign by Government and NGOs, women participated effectively in the last elections in 1992 both as candidates and voters.

Women's Desk

Under the political wing of government, the National Resistance Movement Secretariat was established in 1987. A directorate of Women's affairs was one of the five directorates at the Secretariat. Since 1990 the Directorate has been changed to a Women's Desk under the Directorate of Mass Mobilisation and Education. The desk has the mandate to mobilise women and empower them politically. Its main tasks have been raising the political awareness of women and conducting political education for women. Women cadres are trained in the various political schools scattered throughout the country. The trained cadres are posted in every district to monitor the political interests of the people. Since 1990 it has been government policy that all students admitted to University attend a six-week political education course before they join. This exposes the youngsters, who are the future leaders, to political issues in Uganda.

Participants of the Conference

The National Machinery

In April 1988, the National Resistance Movement government established the Ministry of Women in Development following a strong lobby by the former National Council of Women and Women NGOs. The Ministry has, since 1991, been merged with the Culture and Youth Departments. The Women in Development Department has played a major part in empowering women in the democratisation process in Uganda. More details of this will be discussed later in the paper. The Department has also continued to mainstream gender-related issues though government at the policy level across all the sectors, i.e. health education, education, local government etc.

The Women's Councils

Recently, the government, by the Women's Councils Statute No.1 of 1993, established Women's Councils. In line with the Resistance Councils' Structure the Women's Council Structure is a six-tier one beginning at the village level right up to the national level, with a National Women's Council at the top. The Councils are providing yet another forum through which women are mobilised for the development of their local areas through civic participation. The Councils were elected in January 1994 throughout the country. Through the Councils, they communicate their specific needs to the various levels of community planning, and plan and implement projects that are of benefit to their local communities and the nation as a whole.

Women Non-governmental Organisations

In Uganda, government recognised the complementary role of NGOs in the process of development and democratisation. In this context I will mainly refer to those NGOs and community based organisations that are formed for the advancement of women or have programmes which are focusing on women in the socio-economic and religious fields. Of course, NGOs existed in Uganda even before the National Resistance Movement came into power in 1986. However, since 1986, the government has provide an enabling environment for the fruitful operation of both local and international NGOs focusing on the advancement of women. Women NGOs such as NAWOU, FIDA, ACFODE, UWFCT the Uganda Association of University Women etc. have played a major role in the empowerment of networking, production and dissemination of information, organising seminars, workshops at all levels, using the media to raise women's awareness about their right to participate in democratic institutions established by government i.e. through radios and television programs, newspapers articles, drama, using illustrated research, NGOs conducted civic education for the electorate prior to the Constituent Assembly elections and monitored elections to ensure that everything was done demo-

cratically. The National Resistance Movement government has also developed several other ways of ensuring that women participate in the government of their country.

Women in Decision Making Positions

Female participation in positions of decision making has greatly improved in the last nine years compared to the 1970s and early 1980s. This has been due to the increasing awareness among women of their potential in contributing to the development process and also the affirmative action taken by government to counter the factors that militate against women in high level positions. Today there are two women cabinet ministers, one of whom is the Minister of

Agriculture, Animal Husbandry & Fisheries and two deputy ministers. Of course the number of women in decisions making positions compared to that of men is still very low. However, compared to other African countries, Uganda's achievements are really commendable. The other issue which needs to be discoursed is the quality of this participation.

The Constitutional Making Process

Soon after the National Resistance Movement Government took over power, it was clearly committed to basing its government on democratic principles. It thus embarked on a process of reviewing the Constitution of Uganda which was promulgated in 1967 and the several amendments made by the various governments since then. The government made sure that the new Constitution of Uganda should be made in such a way that it would reflect a fundamental change from the manner in which the previous constitutions of Uganda (1962, 1966 & 1967) were made. It was to be a popular Constitution emanating from the people as a true reflection of their interests and aspirations.

In 1988, the government passed the Constitutional Commission Statute No. 5 of 1988. This statute established the Uganda Constitutional Commission with the mandate to formulate and structure a draft constitution that would form the basis of the news constitution of Uganda. The commission was to study and review all the past Constitutions and constitutional instruments with a view to making proposals for the enactment of a new Constitution that would among other things:

(a)   establish a free democratic system of government that would guarantee the fundamental rights and freedom of the people of Uganda; and

(b)   endeavor to develop a democratic free and fair electoral system that would ensure the people's representation in the legislature and other levels.

The Uganda Constitutional Commission had two women Commissioners out of the 22 members. The two ladies were very dynamic activists who were committed to ensuring that the Commission reached out to both men and women in Uganda through educational programs on Constitutional issues. They also encouraged and collected views from both men and women.

The commission's work took four solid years (1989 - 1992). For the first time in Uganda women were encouraged to participate in the Constitutional making process. The need for equality under the law could not be over - emphasised. Discriminatory provisions in the 1967 Constitution were brought to the attention of women.

Constitutional Consultation Program for Women

However, due to our cultural constraints it was noted in 1989 by the then Ministry of Women in Development that women's participation in the Education Seminars of the Commission was still very minimal compared to that of men, and it was decided to embark on a constitutional Consultation Program for Women. The program was implemented in conjunction with several women's NGOs like the then National Council of Women, The Uganda Women Lawyers' Association, Action for Development, the Uganda Association of University Women and the Uganda Media Women's Association. They organised a brainstorming workshop in 1989 which drew up a plan of action for the Consultation Program.

Through the Consultation Program for Women the Ministry was able to develop materials in English and other local languages for distribution and use by the trainers. A wide cross-section of women throughout the country was reached with the message about the constitution making process and the need for women to participate. Women did not only discuss constitutional issues but also discussed other legal issues that negatively affect their efforts to improve their conditions and status. These included property rights, inheritance rights, marriage and divorce laws etc. Therefore, the program was both geared toward collecting women's views on constitutional issues as well as raising their awareness about their rights and socio-economic status.

The participation of women in this program was overwhelming. They turned up in large number in almost all the centers. As a result a report on their recommendations was compiled in 1991 and submitted to the Constitutional Commission for consideration when formulating the draft constitution. The other non-constitutional issues raised are being used for the law reform program.

I am glad to mention that most of the women's recommendations were taken into account in the draft constitution. For example, under chapter three of the Draft Constitution, National Objectives and Directive Principles of State polity, it is clearly provided in clause 9(i) that:

- The state shall be based on democratic principles which empower and encourage the active participation of all citizens at all levels in their own governance"

- "The people shall express their will and consent on who should govern them and how they should be governed through regular, free and fair elections of their representatives".

Clause 12 clearly states the principles for the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and freedom. Clauses 13 - 17 ensures the protection of the rights and interests of minority groups, oppressed and disadvantaged groups like women, children, and the disabled. Clause 20 (3) provides that: "Necessary measures shall be taken to ensure that women have equal opportunity with men to play an active role in the development process". Clause 50 (3) specifically provides that: "Men and women shall be equal under the law in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life".

Therefore, if all these provisions are maintained in the new Constitution of Uganda women will be clearly empowered to participate in the process of democratisation in Uganda. To ensure that women's interests are taken into account, women were mobilised and encouraged through civic education programs by both government and NGOs to participate in the Constituent Assembly (CA) elections which took place in April 1994. The records at the Constitutional Commission's office show that women's participation was over 50% better compared to the 1980 elections. They were eager to elect the delegates who are now debating on the provisions of the draft constitution.

Many women also competed for the various posts in the Constituent Assembly. Nine women were able to successfully compete with men and defeated them honourably. This was only possible because these women had realised they had the potential and self confidence to compete with men.

One Constituent Assembly delegate competed against six men, one of whom was a minister in the government. We women in Uganda feel very proud that there were many women candidates competing for each posts (3 - 7) candidates per post) and so the competition was very stiff.

Contributory Factors to Women's Empowerment

- Women need to realise that there is strength in numbers for them to be able to bring about changes in our society. Women must support one another. They must avoid conflict and undermining each other.

- Women need to be firm and stand up for what they believe is right and have decided to do. Raising self awareness is the first important step in developing local leadership.

- Women need to make themselves accepted so that people can listen to them and respect them. Of course with our traditional/culstural stereotyped perceptions, decision making and politics are still a men's domain. For example, female Constituent Assembly delegates were asked questions such as Are you married? Where is your husband?" Do you have a family?" Such questions were not put to men. So women have to understand that leadership does not necessarily relate to a person's marital status but her talents, potential and abilities. The reality is that women need to work twice as hard to gain recognition.
The other aspect of acceptance is related to our marriage unions. In the Constituent Assembly elections, several women competed for posts in areas here they were born but they were married to men from other tribes and from different areas. They were rejected by both men and women voters. In addition, women who tried to stand in the home areas of their husband's were also rejected as outsiders. So where does a woman belong? This was a real dilemma.

- Women must be economically empowered as well. It was evident through the Constituent Assembly elections that ordinary people who are living below the poverty line were interested in candidates who were ready to meet their basic needs. However, most women were poor. Politics is a very expensive game. It was the desire of many women candidates to bring about change in the politics of Uganda. So they sensitised the public td look for competence, clarity of thought, transparency and not personal gains and interests in the competing candidates. However, this works better where people's immediate needs do not overshadow the long term effects of their bad choice of leaders.

- Women must be good communicators. They require good communicating and negotiating skills. They must have well researched information when talking about gender related issues so as to be convincing.

- Women need family and community support. If the environment is hostile and not

conducive at all women's participation in the process of democratisation is greatly curtailed.

- Literacy and education are essential components in the democratisation process. In Uganda a large percentage of women especially in the semi-urban and rural areas re still illiterate. This makes them vulnerable and very easy to manipulate by cunning politicians. A good illustration was in the Constituent Assembly elections. Illiterate women could not read the instructions for themselves before voting and civil educators sometimes confused them on procedural matters. Some of those who used a thumb print did not wait for the ink to dry before folding their ballot papers, which were then disqualified because the thumb print appeared next to two pictures.

- Women at the top and at the grassroots need to form a strong alliance so that the former do not exploit the latter for personal gain and interest, and the latter do not alienate the former because they are the ones who can articulate their needs and interests. Both groups need each other. So women who intend to stand for reelection most keep in touch with their constituencies.

- Both men and women need civic education to keep them politically aware and alert. The government, though the Constitutional Commission and Ministry of Women in Development conducted civic education for the people,with the Ministry of Women in Development mainly focusing on women. NGOs also participated in civic education i.e. through the National Organisation for Civil Education and Election Monitoring (NOCEM). Nocem is made up of 10 NGOs, including among others FIDA (U) and ACFODE. Church - based organisations like the Mothers' Union and the Uganda Catholic Women's Guild also organised seminars on civic education for their members.

- Funding agencies such as DANIDA, NAWOU, the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Uganda, the Uganda Constitutional Commission, WOCEM, USAID, FHRI,ACFODE,FIDA (U), the US.Embassy and the British Council have been able to support the Ministry of Women in Development. For example, DANIDA provided computer equipment and stationery, USAID provided vehicles, and NOCEM/USAID supported the civic education programme. Without their help it would have been impossible to achieve all the things I have mentioned about.

- Finally, I will say that no women can be a good community, grassroots and political leader without having a solid confidence and healthy sense of identify, personal value and her potential to participate in shaping the political, economic and social realities of her country.

I must say that our most recently concluded elections were free and fair (Report of the Constitutional Commission, Nocem and Acfode monitoring team). The elections were successful and peacefully concluded. This was stated by Justice R. H. Bisanga, member of the African Commission on Human and People's rights at a workshop organised by the Human Rights' Network (HURINET) on 15 June 1994.

However, there is a lot that remains to be done to ensure that what we have so far achieved is maintained and improved upon. For example, the Constituent Assembly delegates need to ensure that the provisions in the draft Constitution are defended and then implemented. The Ministry of Women in Development already has a program in place which is sensitising women Constituent Assembly delegates on gender - related issues, briefing them on issues of procedures, equipping them with appropriate skills such as lobbying and negotiation skills.

Other NGOs like Nawou has a Gender Information Centre at the International Conference Centre where the women Constituent Assembly delegates meet. They attend the Constituent Assembly sessions, monitor their progress and the participation of women in the debates, provide meeting space and information for Constituent Assembly delegates and radio and television brainstorming discussions which link the Constituent Assembly delegates with the public. Acfode also has a program called the Link which cover 20 district in Uganda. This links the public with the Constituent Assembly. The Uganda Gender Resources Centre has also held several training seminars for Constituent Assembly delegates. The Foundation for Human Rights Initiative (FHRI) organised research into whether human rights had been well considered and incorporated in the draft constitution. Their findings were presented to a cross-section of people invited from the public and private sectors for comment and additions. A workshop was then organised for the Constituent Assembly delegates in May and the findings presented to them. So the struggle continues.

Women still have to work hard after the new constitution is passed to get rid of all discriminatory and inadequate laws in order to bring them into conformity with the provisions of the new constitution. I will just take a few movements to share with you a few constraints to women's participation in politics and decision making.

- Lack of time-women have multiple roles which leave them very little time to participate in politics. In fact, there is a general belief that successful women in politics neglect their families. This is also true with our small associations groups and clubs. Women's absenteeism in meetings is common.

- Women's indifference to issues that they believe are not their concern.

- Lack of sufficient education and functional literacy. There is also a lack of clear understanding about the benefits of participation.

- Limited accessibility to relevant data for the purposes of sensitising both men and women.

- Appointing of the same women to all boards and committees. This could be a lack of information about women who are well qualified to fill these positions.

To improve women's participation in the process of democratisation the following are happening in Uganda:

- Civic and political education are now being carried out continuously both by the government and the NGOs sector;

- Women are using the media to continue with the sensitisation and awareness raising program; women's networking program, production of news letters, etc.

- Legal Education

- The number of girls in higher education is increasing.

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RESOLUTION OF PARTICIPANTS OF THE CONFERENCE "EMPOWER-MENT OF WOMEN IN THE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATISATION", HELD IN DAR -ES- SALAAM ON THE 5TH - 6TH SEPTEMBER 1994.

- Realising that the participation of women in the process of democratisation and decision making is very crucial for the self development of women and the nation as whole;

- concious that there are several fundamental constrains that militate against women's participation and that we have to strategise and overcome;

- and having identified the following as major areas of concern for women's participation

   (a)   socio-cultural
   (b)   education, information and communication
   (c)   poverty and economic policies
   (d)   legislation,

- conscious of the fact that progress in area of women's political empowerment has been minimal;

- recognising that we cannot be active in politics and democratic institutions without a deliberate resolution to do so beginning within our own household right up to national level;

- we the participants in this 2 day conference on Women's Empowerment in the Process of Democratisation recommend and resolve that:

Socio-cultural constraints

1. A deliberate and concerted effort be made to sensitise the entire society and create a linkage between gender, empowerment and democracy.

2. The gender division of labour at different levels be transformed to make it more equitable and more democratic through a process of resocialisation within the family, public and community at large, through the introduction of appropriate and cost effective technology.

3. Women's pressure groups and government at different levels make a deliberate and systematic effort to ensure that all oppressive practices that discriminate against women are outdated.

Education, Information and Communication

1. NGOs lobby for a review and reform of the education policy and curriculum to make it gender transformative.

2. Civic and human rights be included in the curriculum at every level, including adult education, and NGOs and CBOs promote the same through animation and other participatory approaches.

3. NGOs and CBOs make use of all forms of media to disseminate information about gender and democracy.

Poverty and Economic Policies

1. Women especially at the grassroots be encouraged and promoted to participate in the formulation and implementation of economic policies.

2. Specific efforts be taken to empower women economically through provision of information on credit facilities, technical assistance and formation of self help groups.

Legislation

1. Pressure groups be formed to lobby for legal reforms.

2. NGOs be made autonomous of the government, and have constitutions that enable them to participate in politics but to remain non-partisan while incasing networking and coordination of their activities.

3. Women in this country consider forming political parties controlled by women but with membership drawn from both genders.

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