



THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND

NATIONAL GENDER POLICY 2010



FOREWORD

The Government of Swaziland has recognized the need to ensure equitable and full participation of women and men at all levels of development. Deliberate efforts have been employed to ensure that the barriers that prevent full and effective participation of women and men in all sectors are removed. To achieve this, the Government commissioned the formulation of a National Gender Policy through a consultative process to remove prevailing gender imbalances.

This National Gender Policy is aimed at redressing the inequities between women and men. It provides a vision to improve the living conditions of women and men including practical and forward looking guidelines and strategies for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the related constitutional provisions. The objectives and strategies proposed in the policy will be implemented in line with all other policies.

It is my hope that this policy will facilitate the amendment of legislation and influence positive changes for implementation of activities aimed at achieving gender equity. Furthermore, the Policy will serve as a guide to address the strategic needs of both women and men.

Through this policy I strongly believe that women will be able to play a collaborative and dynamic role in the development of our country.



SENATOR THEMBA N. MASUKU
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The National Gender Policy is the outcome of issues and views raised by participants, stakeholders and individuals.

The Deputy Prime Minister's Office (Gender and Family Issues Unit) wishes to thank all the individuals and organizations that have made contributions to the development of this document. In particular, the Office extends its gratitude to United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the financial and technical support rendered during the entire policy formulation process.

Special thanks and appreciation is extended to the Consultants who assisted in producing the policy. Sincere appreciation goes to the Sectoral Committees who worked tirelessly on the thematic areas of concern consolidating the issues and the strategies.

In addition to the above, appreciation is also extended to the Team that reviewed and finalized the policy document and developed the implementation plan and the monitoring and evaluation framework.



KHANGEZIWE MABUZA
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
Foreword	3
Acknowledgments.....	4
Table of Contents	5
Glossary of Terms.....	7
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	11
1. Introduction.....	13
2. Problem Statement.....	14
3. Rationale	15
4. Vision of the Gender and Family Issues Unit.....	15
5. Mission of the Gender and Family Issues Unit	15
6. Efforts of the Government of Swaziland	16
7. Methodology.....	17
8. Policy Vision	17
9. Policy Mission.....	17
10. Policy Goal and Objectives	18
10.1 Policy Goal.....	18
10.2 Policy Objectives	18
11. General Strategies.....	18
12.0 Thematic Programme Areas.....	19
12.1 Family and Socialization	19
12.1.1 Thematic Policy Statement	19
12.1.2 Thematic Objective.....	19
12.2.3 Strategies.....	19
12.2 Education and Training.....	20
12.2.1 Thematic Policy Statement	21
12.2.2 Thematic Objectives	21
12.2.3 Strategies.....	21
12.3 Politics and Decision Making.....	21
12.3.1 Thematic Policy Statement	22
12.3.2 Thematic Programme Objectives	22
12.3.3 Strategies.....	22
12.4 Poverty and Economic Empowerment	23
12.4.1 Thematic Policy Statement	23
12.4.2 Specific Thematic Programme Objectives.....	23

TABLE OF CONTENTS	PAGE
12.4.3 Strategies.....	23
12.5 Legal and Human Rights	24
12.5.1 Thematic Policy Statement	24
12.5.2 Thematic Programme Objective	24
12.5.3 Strategies.....	25
12.6 Health, Reproductive Health and Rights, HIV and AIDS	25
12.6.1 Thematic Policy Statement	26
12.6.2 Thematic Programme Objectives	26
12.6.3 Strategies.....	26
12.7 Gender Based Violence	27
12.7.1 Thematic Programme Objective	28
12.7.2 Thematic Policy Statement	28
12.7.3 Strategies.....	28
12.8 Environment and Natural Resources	28
12.8.1 Thematic Policy Statement	29
12.8.2 Thematic Programme Objectives	29
12.8.3 Strategies.....	29
12.9 Information and Communication	30
12.9.1 Policy Statement.....	31
12.9.2 Thematic Objectives.....	31
12.9.3 Strategies.....	31
13.0 Institutional Framework for the Implementation of the National Gender Policy	32
13.1 The National Gender Machinery	32
13.1.1 Gender Focal Teams (GFTs)	32
14. Budgeting	32
15. Monitoring and Evaluation	33

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- Care-giver means any person who provides emotional, psychological, physical, economic, spiritual or social care and support services to another.
- Child means every human being below the age of 18 years.
- Discrimination means any distinction, exclusion or restriction which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by any person, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, civil and any other field.
- Empowerment is the process by which people take control to overcome obstacles. Female empowerment is women taking action to understand, identify and overcome gender discrimination in order to achieve gender equity.
- Gender is defined as the set of characteristics, roles and behaviour patterns that socially and culturally distinguish women from men. Gender characteristics change over time and differ from one culture to another. The concept of gender refers to the roles and characteristics of women and men and to the relations of power between them.
- Gender Based Violence means all acts perpetrated against women, men, girls and boys on the basis of their sex which cause or could cause them physical, sexual, psychological, emotional or economic harm, including the threat to take such acts, or to undertake the imposition of arbitrary restrictions on or deprivation of fundamental freedoms in private or public life in peace time and during situations of armed or other forms of conflict.
- Gender discrimination means that individuals are treated differently on the basis of their sex. In many societies, this is maintained by structural discrimination against women in the distribution of income, access to resources and participation in decision-making.

- Gender division of labour describes a pattern in which society assigns women one set of roles and men another set, based on distribution of reward.
- Gender equity means fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities. A gender equity approach ensures that women have a fair share of the benefits and responsibilities in society, as well as equal treatment before the law, equal access to social services, including education, and equal pay for work of equal value.
- Gender mainstreaming means the process of identifying gender gaps and making the concerns and experiences of women, men, girls and boys integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all spheres so that the benefits are equitably distributed.
- Gender roles means socially-defined roles for women and men. Definitions of gender roles change over time and differ between cultures.
- Gender sensitivity means the ability to acknowledge and recognize gender issues, especially the ability to recognize women's distinct perceptions and interests arising from their gender role. Gender sensitivity is the beginning of gender awareness, which is more analytical and more questioning of gender disparities. It means taking into account specific gender needs of both women and men at all levels of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
- Gender stereotyping occurs when men or women are persistently attributed certain characteristics or roles, thereby creating the belief that these are invariably linked to gender. For instance, the perceptions that all women are weak and caring and that all men are strong and able to make important decisions are gender stereotypes that are frequently encountered. Gender stereotyping reinforces gender inequality by portraying assumptions and conditions that maintain the inequality as biologically or culturally fixed.

- Health means a complete state of physical, mental, spiritual and social well-being of an individual and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.
- Human Trafficking means the recruitment, transportation, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of threat, abuse of power, position or vulnerability, force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud or deception to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of amongst other things sexual and financial exploitation or witchcraft.
- Informal sector means the portion of a country's economy that lies outside of any formal regulatory environment.
- Multiple roles of women means the several responsibilities that women shoulder in the reproductive, productive and community management spheres.
- National Gender Machineries means national structures with the mandate of executing and monitoring gender and related policies and programmes in line with national, regional and international commitments.
- Patriarchy is the male precedence of ownership and of the control of resources that maintain gender discrimination.
- Practical gender needs means those needs of women and men that can be met without challenging gender inequalities. They relate to the areas in which women or men have primary responsibilities and include the need for access to health care, water and sanitation, education for children, etc.
- Reproductive health is the state of physical, mental and social well-being in all matters relating to reproduction and to the reproductive system. It includes a satisfying and safe sex life, the ability to have children and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. It also includes the right of women and men to be informed and to make choices about their sexuality, to decide when and with whom to have sex, and to have access to effective methods of protection against Sexually Transmitted Infections

(STIs) and pregnancy. Reproductive health care includes services for family planning, treatment of infertility, obstetrics and the prevention and treatment of reproductive tract infections.

- Reproductive rights means the basic rights of women and men to decide freely and responsibly on issues of sexuality and family planning, to have access to information to make decisions and the means to carry them out. Reproductive rights include the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health and the right to decide on issues of reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence.
- Sex refers to the biological/physiological differences between women and men that are universal and fixed.
- Sex roles mean roles defined by biological differences between men and women. For instance, pregnancy and child-bearing are female sex roles that men cannot assume.
- Sexual harassment means any persistent unwelcome sexual advance, request for favour verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another, whether or not such sexual advance or request arises out of unequal power relations.
- Sexual health represents an aspect of health that is somewhat more inclusive than reproductive health. It includes the enhancement of personal relations, respect for the security of the person and the physical integrity of the human body as expressed in human rights documents, and the right to make decisions concerning sexuality and reproduction free of discrimination, coercion and violence.
- Sexual rights include the human rights of women and men to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality.
- Social safety nets means the measures taken or applied to mitigate the effects of poverty, gender based violence and other social ills.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACHPR	African Charter on Human and People's Rights
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMICAALL	Alliance of Mayors Initiative for Community Action on Aids at the Local Level
ANC	Ante-Natal Clinics
ASBC	Association of Swaziland Business Community
ASHEWA	Assistance for Strengthening Higher Education for Women in Africa
CANGO	Coordinating Assembly of Non- Governmental Organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DPMO	Deputy Prime Minister's Office
FENCOM	Federation of National Association of Women in Business
FLAS	Family Life Association of Swaziland
FODSWA	Federation of Organisations of People with Disabilities in Swaziland
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GEMSWA	Gender and Media Swaziland
GFT	Gender Focal Teams
HEU	Health Education Unit
HIV	Human Immune Viruses
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
IDM	Institute of Development Management
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
ITC	Information, Technology and Communication
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOEPD	Ministry of Economic Planning and Development
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFAIC	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy
MOPS	Ministry of Public Service
MOSCYA	Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs
MOTEA	Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs
MOWT	Ministry of Public Works and Transportation

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NDS	National Development Strategy
NERCHA	National Emergency Response Council on HIV/AIDS
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PEP	Post Exposure Prophylaxis
PPCU	Public Policy Co-ordinating Unit
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
PSI	Population Services International
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
RHM	Rural Health Motivators
RSP	Royal Swaziland Police
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAVIP	Swaziland Association of the Visually Impaired Persons
SCOGWA	Swaziland Committee on Gender and Women's Affairs
SHAPE	Swaziland Schools HIV/AIDS and Population Education
SHIES	Swaziland Household Income and Expenditure Survey
SIMPA	Swaziland Institute of Management and Public Administration
SIPA	Swaziland Investment Promotion Authority
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNA	Swaziland Nurses Association
SNAJ	Swaziland National Association of Journalist
SNAP	Swaziland National AIDS Programme
SNAT	Swaziland National Association of Teachers
SNC	Swaziland National Council
SNCAC	Swaziland National Council of Arts and Culture
SNYC	Swaziland National Youth Council
SNL	Swazi Nation Land
SPEED	Smart Programme on Economic Empowerment and Development
SRH	Sexual Reproductive Health
SRHU	Sexual Reproductive Health Unit
STI	Sexual Transmitted Infections
SWAGAA	Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse
SWATCYP	Swaziland Theatre for Children and Young People
TTC	Thematic Technical Committees
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNISWA	University of Swaziland
WCW	World Conference on Women
WLSA	Women and Law in Southern Africa
WPC	Women Parliamentary Caucus

1. INTRODUCTION

The promotion of gender equity and the empowerment of women has been recognized as a key millennium development goal. To meet this goal, the Kingdom of Swaziland has developed a gender policy to provide guidelines for attaining gender equity in the Kingdom. The development of appropriate policies and strengthening of national gender machineries to fully undertake the challenging mandates are crucial actions particularly in addressing structural relationships of inequality between men and women.

The National Gender Policy provides guidelines, indicators and a framework to assist stakeholders to achieve gender equity as provided for in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland and other relevant International instruments that the country has ratified. The policy will create strategic synergies with various stakeholders to facilitate effective and efficient implementation of commitments that will make a difference in the lives of all people at all levels.

Historically in this country, women and other vulnerable groups have had minimum input in the development thinking such as political decision-making, and in various areas of policy formulation and implementation processes.

It is in light of these realities that His Majesty's Government has commissioned the formulation of a national gender policy that will guide and direct the process of attainment of gender equity. It is therefore significant to reflect and re-strategize in order to harmonize efforts of national and international integration on gender in the country and establish dynamic and sustainable partnerships between government and other stakeholders.

This Gender Policy recognizes the twelve critical areas of concern defined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action as very relevant to the situation of Swaziland and promotes the implementation of actions by sectoral agencies. Nine thematic areas are considered critical in the overall advancement of gender equality in Swaziland:

- Family and Socialization,
- Poverty and Economic Empowerment;
- Health, Re-productive Rights and HIV/AIDS;
- Education and Training;
- Legal and Human Rights;
- Politics and Decision Making,
- Gender Based Violence;
- Information, Communication and Arts,
- Environment and Natural Resources

This policy is also guided by relevant UN Conventions and recommendations of International Conferences, Regional declarations and national legal instruments and development frameworks such as:

- The National Development Strategy (NDS)
- The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland
- The Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan
- The Decentralization Policy
- The SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children.
- The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development
- The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR)
- The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa
- The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)
- International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)
- The Fourth World Conference on Women 1995
- Beijing Plus Five and Plus Ten Outcome Documents
- The Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The Swazi Society is characterized by inequality between women and men in different areas. The policy therefore seeks to promote fair and equitable distribution of economic and political resources, and the full participation at community and policy level regardless of gender. This policy also aims at bringing to the fore challenges caused by gender disparities versus behavioural practices that have in the past been regarded as cultural practices.

3. RATIONALE

Gender inequality is an impediment towards the attainment of sustainable national development. Reducing gender inequality is critical for improving access to wage employment and control over productive resources by vulnerable groups. In order to meet these challenges, a gendered approach is critical. Moreover, National and Sectoral Development Strategies such as the NDS, the PRSAP, SPEED, and all other strategies aimed at achieving the MDGs need to take into account the differences between women and men, girls and boys.

The National Gender Policy will serve as a tool to guide and direct the planning, programming and implementation processes of national, regional, community and sectoral development programmes and projects. The Gender Policy will provide the legal framework for institutionalizing gender mainstreaming at all levels and in all sectors, including the allocation of adequate resources to achieve its goal. It will take into account the concerns and aspirations of men and women, boys and girls. It will ensure improved allocation of resources, consolidate the diverse sectoral, institutional and geographical development efforts and provide a framework for assessing the impact of the collective efforts at community, sectoral, regional and national levels. It will give equitable opportunities to both males and females regardless of age, disability and status to participate in all aspects of the development process on their own terms.

4. VISION OF THE GENDER AND FAMILY ISSUES UNIT

A Swaziland where women and men enjoy similar opportunities to participate in the sustainable national development of the country, and co-exist, enjoying the benefits of gender equality and equity.

5. MISSION OF THE GENDER AND FAMILY ISSUES UNIT

To mainstream gender into all areas of national development, including legislation, policies, programmes and projects.

6. EFFORTS OF THE GOVERNMENT

Hitherto Government has undertaken numerous initiatives to ensure full and coherent participation of women and men in achieving the national objectives of economic growth, self-reliance, social justice and stability through involving women and men in the mainstream of the country's development.

The National Vision 2022 articulated in the National Development Strategy (NDS), spells out a number of strategies aimed at enhancing development, eliminating gender gaps and offering equitable opportunities to all citizens irrespective of their sex. The NDS also emphasizes adoption of a gender-balanced approach to development in all national development plans, policies and projects.

In March 1994, His Majesty's Government launched the Swaziland Committee on Gender and Women's Affairs (SCOGWA) within the Ministry of Home Affairs, to serve as the main coordinating body for the development of a gender programme. Some of the achievements of SCOGWA include preparation of an issues paper known as the Gender and Women's Issues Paper: Swaziland Platform for Action For Equality Development and Peace, and lobbying for the establishment of the Gender Coordinating Unit. The Gender and Family Issues Unit subsequently initiated the Gender Focal Points (GFPs) in every ministry to promote gender mainstreaming in all sectors of national development.

Furthermore, as part fulfilment of Government's commitment to promoting women's participation in development, Government appointed a nine member Task Force in 1997, to draw up a gender policy statement to inform the actual process of formulating a National Gender Policy. This initiative was carried out through the Economic Social Reform Agenda (ESRA) which was the implementing tool for the NDS.

A recent development by Government is the ratification in 2004 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the adoption of the country's new constitution in 2005 which seeks to promote equity between women and men. Whilst the environment in which the gender policy is formulated can be said to be conducive to the exercise,

social transformation, policy and institutional reform are crucial for the attainment of gender equity and women's empowerment. The domestication of CEDAW and a gender responsive national constitution will no doubt lend more weight to other initiatives like the gender policy, in ensuring that power imbalances between women and men, boys and girls are redressed and discriminatory practices curtailed.

7. METHODOLOGY

A wide spectrum of stakeholders was consulted to solicit views to inform the drafting of this policy document. A series of workshops, seminars, dialogues and focus group discussions were held to arrive at a consensus on the issues dealt with in the policy document, the proposed strategies and institutional framework for the implementation of the policy. Key players consulted in the process included policy makers at sectoral and national levels, non-governmental organisations, community based organisations, community and traditional leaders, members of Parliament, and youth organizations. The outcome of the Gender Policy conforms to the Constitution.

8. POLICY VISION

A Swaziland where women, men, girls and boys have similar opportunities to participate freely as equal partners in all spheres of public life, including all decision making processes and have fair access to and control over resources.

9. POLICY MISSION

To achieve a gender balance in the socio-economic, legal, religious, cultural, political processes of national development by developing and implementing strategies and interventions, including capacity building, that recognizes and acknowledges the needs and interests of women and men in the eradication of gender inequality, gender based violence, HIV and AIDS and poverty in the country.

10. POLICY GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

10.1. Policy Goal

Recognizing the potential that all human resources can participate in and make a difference to national development, the overall goal of this policy is;

To align and promote Government's effort with regional and international commitments in providing equitable opportunities for women and men, boys and girls at all levels for the attainment of Gender equity, women empowerment and social justice.

10.2. Policy objectives

10.2.1 To identify, conserve and promote positive aspects of Swazi traditions and culture in order to promote equitable opportunities and rights for both males and females in all aspects of development.

10.2.2 To ensure equitable access by girls and boys, women and men to education, training, and health services, and control over resources such as land and credit for improved quality of life.

10.2.3 To ensure that gender sensitive laws exist and are enforced.

10.2.4 To provide direction for the development of effective programmes for the prevention of gender-based violence.

11. GENERAL STRATEGIES

11.1 Capacity building for Gender Mainstreaming in all national and sectoral policies, plans, programmes and budgets.

11.2 Strengthening the capacity and capability of the Ministry in which the Gender Unit is located and in particular the Gender Coordination Unit for the coordination of the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Gender Policy.

11.3 Advocacy for the allocation of resources and public expenditure so that they are equally beneficial to men and women.

11.4 Strengthening partnerships with development partners, Non

- Governmental Organizations and community leaderships for gender equity and the empowerment of women and girls
- 11.5 Mobilization at all levels for social transformation on gender issues and for the implementation of the gender policy

12. THEMATIC PROGRAMME AREAS

12.1 Family and Socialization

It is acknowledged world-wide that the family as an institution plays a pivotal role in preserving and transmitting cultural values from generation to generation. The family is the chief agent of socialization and therefore carries the responsibility for preparation of the young for the diverse roles they will play in their lives.

12.1.1. Thematic Policy Statement:

The Government shall create a conducive family environment for women and men, boys and girls to fully enjoy their human rights and develop their full potential/capabilities.

12.1.2. Thematic Objectives:

- To ensure a conducive family environment for gender equity
- To ensure that women and men, boys and girls fully enjoy their human rights, and develop their full potential/capability.

12.1.3. Strategies

- I. Promoting positive cultural practices.
- II. Developing programmes to promote the self esteem of both women and men from adolescence stage to adulthood
- III. Develop mechanisms for the economic empowerment of both women and men to ensure economic independence
- IV. Advocating for the integration of human rights and gender awareness education into community belief systems, school curricula including those of training institutions.
- V. Promotion for the enforcement of the human rights of children as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in order to protect the rights of children.

- VI. Developing programmes to focus on family life and human relations.
- VII. Empowering parents with gender sensitive parenting skills to raise boys and girls as equal members of the family and to fulfill all gender roles.
- VIII. Mounting education campaigns on inheritance laws, and the importance of writing of wills in order to protect the interests of one's family members.
- IX. Popularizing, domesticating and implementation of CEDAW.
- X. Creating programmes to strengthen the extended family support units to promote socialization and address the emerging social challenges
- XI. Developing programmes to bridge the information gap between the young and adults, mainly with respect to ensuring the passing-on of best indigenous knowledge, skills, culture and traditions.
- XII. Developing entrepreneurial programmes for both women and men from family level to the work place
- XIII. Introducing same life skills for both women and men at family level to the work place.

12.2. Education and Training

The Government of Swaziland believes that education is a basic human right and both formal and informal education plays a key role not only in socialization but in development as well. This is further supported by the Government policy on education, which promotes equal accessibility and availability of quality education to boys and girls.

However, the Government's concern is that although the enrolment of both boys and girls is about the same at primary level, statistics show a significant decrease in the number of girl children at higher levels of education particularly in the science related fields. The high attrition rate among girls at higher levels of the education system can be attributed partly to behavioural practices such as early marriage of the girl child and high levels of unplanned and unsupported pregnancies.

12.2.1. Thematic Policy Statement:

The Government shall provide opportunities for quality education for all children, boys and girls to complete the education system and also ensure that men and women have equitable access to training opportunities.

12.2.2. Thematic Objectives:

- To provide education for all in line with the National Constitution (Section 29) and Goal 2 of the Millennium Development Goals.
- To take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate practices that contribute to early dropout from schools especially for girls.
- To provide the same training opportunities for men and women.

12.2.3. Strategies:

- I. Social mobilization campaigns to sensitize family and the public on the importance of girls and boys education and ensure their retention in school.
- II. Advocating for government to develop and implement a policy for universal education for all at primary level in line with the country's Constitution.
- III. Capacity building of educational planners, curriculum developers, teachers, inspectors of schools and all educational managers in gender concepts, and gender mainstreaming approach.
- IV. Formulate programmes to prevent teenage pregnancy and encourage their re-integration back into the school system.

12.3 Politics and Decision Making

Women the world over are underrepresented at different levels of leadership and decision making. Their limited participation is associated with social perceptions. Other contributing factors are uneven education levels between women and men and the persistent differentiations in the fields of training and occupations, the lower economic status of women as well as the uneven distribution of roles and responsibilities.

The inadequate participation of women in decision-making indicates that women's concerns at different levels are either ignored or not dealt with fully. As a result, very little progress has been made in women's advancement. The Government of Swaziland is a member state of SADC, and a signatory to The SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children, which commits all member states to fulfill the 30% affirmative action of women in political and decision-making positions by the year 2005, which the national constitution has endorsed. Currently SADC has increased the representation of women to 50% in the newly signed SADC Gender and Development Protocol. With the gender policy in place, it is hoped that the number of women in decision-making positions will increase at different levels of the government structures.

12.3.1. Thematic Policy Statement

The Government shall ensure a fair representation and participation of women and men in all decision making positions and structures and ensure the provision of increased capacity for leadership particularly for women.

12.3.2. Thematic Programme Objectives

- To increase women's participation in power structures and decision-making positions at different levels of governance.

12.3.3. Strategies

- I. Sensitize communities on gender issues that may inhibit women and men in decision-making and occupying leadership positions.
- II. Promote the implementation of affirmative action programmes towards ensuring representation of women and men in political and decision-making positions by the year 2015.
- III. Mobilize and sensitise women and men's groups on leadership issues, and strengthen their capacities to participate in decision-making and electoral processes.
- IV. Community mobilization for the transformation of decision-making structures at all levels to be inclusive of women on an equitable basis.

- V. Incorporate issues of women leadership and representation in the socialization process of girls and boys in all institutions of learning.

12.4 Poverty and Economic Empowerment

According to the Swaziland Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2001 (SHIES 2001), approximately 69% of the population lives in poverty of which 63% are women and 37% are males. Poverty is also higher in the rural areas with a prevalence rate of 76% as compared to 50% in the urban areas, rendering women the majority of the poor. Poverty manifests itself in various forms such as: chronic malnutrition, high maternal and infant mortality (229 per 100,000 live births and 122 per 1000 live births respectively (MDG: Country Report 2003); poor access to safe drinking water 43% of the population have access (Draft PRSAP: 2005) and poor sanitation (59.6%). Its essential origins derive from a number of factors including issues relating to economic growth, HIV and AIDS, unemployment, gender disparities and governance, unequal national community resource allocations and rapid population growth.

It has been established that poverty can force women and men into situations in which they are vulnerable to social ills including sexual exploitation. Women's economic empowerment is thus a critical part of the development process.

12.4.1. Thematic Policy Statement

The Government shall take measures to reduce the incidence of poverty amongst the poor particularly amongst women and girls.

12.4.2. Specific Thematic Programme Objective:

- To ensure that women and girls have equitable opportunities, and access to, and control over productive and reproductive resources including credit, land, information and services.

12.4.3. Strategies:

- I. Promote self-employment opportunities and economic empowerment to limit dependence on white-collar jobs.

- II. Build Capacity for women, in skills training in Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) development and management.
- III. Build Institutional capacity for gender budgeting and gender analysis (targeting government planners, gender focal points and policy makers, NGOs and parliamentarians).
- IV. Build capacity for a better understanding of global and regional economic processes and their impact on national development and women's empowerment.
- V. Advocate for the setting up of a sustainable social security scheme.
- VI. Mount civic education on how to access development funds to initiate income generating projects and SME's.

12.5 Legal and Human Rights

Section 20 of the Constitution recognizes women's equal status in the social, economic, political and cultural spheres of life. In addition Section 28 specifically entrenches the rights and freedoms of women and the need for government to allocate resources to address the previous disparities between women and men in terms of their full advancement. This policy will ensure that all related legislation takes into account issues of gender justice.

12.5.1. Thematic Policy Statement

The Government shall ensure that all legislation in relation to the recognition, promotion and protection of legal and human rights complies with the principles of the constitution and gender justice.

12.5.2. Thematic Programme Objective:

- To ensure that the constitution is translated into gender responsive legislation where necessary.

12.5.3. Strategies:

- I. Review and reform laws to be in conformity with the Constitution and other instruments that recognize women's rights as human rights.
- II. Enact laws, policies and programmes to realize the full implementation of CEDAW and other relevant human rights instruments.
- III. Mass mobilization campaigns to sensitize people on gender issues, and existing beliefs and practices in relation to legal rights.
- IV. Advocating for and promoting human rights practices and gender principles to be applied in all institutions (the family, community and the state) and in the formulation and design of policies, plans and programmes, and training programmes for justice service providers.
- V. Building the capacity of Parliamentarians and all related institutions on understanding and articulating the gender dimensions of legislation.

12.6 Health, Reproductive Health and Rights, HIV and AIDS

General Health

The Government has taken major strides in the improvement of the nation's health status. There have been, amongst others, interventions to address the HIV and AIDS pandemic, the increasing number of prostate cancer cases amongst men, breast cancer amongst women and general increase in diabetic cases. Health issues mainly arise out of poverty, malnutrition and ill physical and mental state. Other health issues arise as a result of ignorance, traditional practices and inaccessibility of health services in some instances. Often the health status of women is compromised because of the heavy workload borne by them, and that of child bearing too.

There are substantial initiatives from government and non-governmental bodies to improve the reproductive health of women. Despite these efforts the sexual and reproductive status of the population is unsatisfactory as there is still a high prevalence of sexually transmitted infections, unsafe abortions, maternal and neonatal deaths as well as low contraceptive use.

Generally women and girls do not have decision-making capacity over their sexuality and reproductive rights. At family level decisions pertaining to bestowal of conjugal rights, family size, and contraceptive use are largely taken by men. Teenage pregnancy is very high in the country.

12.6.1. Thematic Policy Statement

The Government will promote the availability and accessibility of quality and functional health services and facilities for women, men adolescents, children and persons with disabilities at all levels.

12.6.2. Thematic Programme Objective:

- To take measures that will promote, improve, and protect the sexual and reproductive health rights as well as the health status of men, women, boys and girls throughout their life cycle.

12.6.3. Strategies:

- I. Mount social mobilization campaigns to sensitize communities on gender and health issues highlighting practices that impact negatively on reproductive health, and HIV and AIDS prevention interventions.
- II. Mount awareness raising and training programmes on Health, Reproductive Health and HIV and AIDS for youth, men and women, and the prevention of teenage pregnancy.
- III. Empower women and men through education to care and protect themselves against HIV and AIDS and STIs.
- IV. Promote equitable access to treatment and care for HIV and AIDS by women, men, boys and girls.
- V. Empower women and extended family members with negotiation self-assertive and livelihood skills so they can take decisions on their sexual and reproductive health and rights, and confidently negotiate for safer sex with their partners.
- VI. Employ social marketing strategies to encourage behaviour change by all including young people.
- VII. Awareness mobilization campaigns through media, mobile clinics, Rural Health Motivators (RHMs) and community meetings to encourage men to participate in maternal and reproductive health issues.

- VIII. Formulate a gender responsive Policy on HIV/AIDS
- IX. Promote and support education programmes on Reproductive Health, assertiveness and human sexuality and ensure that children are exposed to the programmes as early as pre-school age.
- X. Improve health facilities and render them fully functional and accessible to all.

12.7 Gender-Based Violence

The incidence of gender-based violence is higher amongst women and children; however, there has also been a steady increase in reports of domestic violence perpetrated against men. Gender based violence is on the increase and continues to rise at an alarming rate such that the need to address it at policy level is immediate.

Mechanisms to address gender based violence particularly for women and the girl child including people with disabilities have remained inadequate and ineffective. In addition the other problem is the reluctance of women and girls to report cases of gender based violence. This is partly due to the social stigma attached to the phenomenon, and the weak, slow criminal justice system.

Moreover, underlying gender-based violence are the unequal power relations between men and women that emanate from institutions like patriarchy, religion and legal systems. There is therefore need for the gender policy to lay the basis for design and implementation of interventions that will deal effectively with both the root causes and ramifications of gender based violence.

Swaziland has committed itself to take measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women and children in an Addendum to the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development. The Addendum recognizes that violence against women and children reflects the unequal relations of power between women and men, resulting in the unequal treatment of women. Further, that violence against women and children is a serious violation of fundamental human rights as acknowledged by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of 1993 as well as CEDAW.

The recently adopted SADC Gender and Development Protocol also contains a comprehensive section on gender based violence and sets targets for the elimination of gender based violence by the year 2015.

12.7.1. Thematic Programme Objective:

- To take integrated measures to prevent and eliminate all forms of gender-based violence.

12.7.2. Thematic policy statement

The Government will create an environment where women, men and children are protected from all forms of violence and provide effective mechanisms for redress as well as providing support including legal aid services to survivors of violence.

12.7.3. Strategies:

- I. Raising awareness on beliefs and attitudes of women and men that lead to violence.
- II. Establishing counseling centres for survivors of violence especially women, children and other disadvantaged groups at regional and community level
- III. Empowering teachers with knowledge, guidance and counseling skills.
- IV. Formulating and enforcing policies and legislation that prohibit all forms of Gender Based Violence.
- V. Building capacity of the Justice system and the Judiciary on issues of Gender-based violence and how to deal with survivors

12.8 Environment and Natural Resources

As part of its development initiatives, Swaziland is currently concerned with the management of the environment and natural resources with particular interest in energy conservation and environmental degradation.

Experience has shown that women are the hardest hit by the effect of environmental mismanagement because of the gender roles that they play in resource mobilization and utilization. They depend greatly on the environment for their basic needs such as fuel, water, food and medicine.

In the peri-urban areas environmental problems are linked to poor sanitation, poor housing conditions, increased environmentally induced diseases and increasing poverty. Poverty and environmental degradation are closely interrelated.

The National Constitution is clear on the issue of environment and national resources, as section 210 states that land, minerals and water are national resources. Subsection 2 in the same provision states that the government shall protect and make rational use of its land, mineral and water resources as well as its fauna and flora and shall take appropriate measures to conserve and improve the environment.

12.8.1. Thematic policy statement

The Government shall ensure that environmental policies, programmes and action plans take into consideration issues of gender in terms of access, control, benefits as well as management of the natural resources

12.8.2. Thematic Programme Objectives:

- To review and reform all legislations that hinder equitable access, control and benefits by all to natural resources.
- To ensure equitable participation of both women and men in environmental management.

12.8.3 Strategies:

- I. Mounting and reinforcing the existing mass campaigns geared to providing communities with basic knowledge about environmental issues and their impact on women, men and the community at large.
- II. Formulating gender responsive policies on the distribution of under-utilized land resources.
- III. Decentralizing environmental awareness raising campaigns to inform men and women on policies and legislation on the use of natural environment assets and the protection of wildlife and the need for their enforcement.
- IV. Integrating a gender perspective in the design and implementation of environmentally sound and sustainable resource management policies.

- V. Developing capacity building for men and women to generate, use and disseminate knowledge on appropriate and efficient energy technologies for household use.

12.9 Information and Communication

Information is one of the strongest tools of empowerment. However, women's access to and control of various forms of media and other sources of information is limited. Moreover, with the advent of information technology, the non-participation of women in accessing information can only be exacerbated further. This is in part attributed to lack of policy framework to ensure that gender perspective is integrated in all media, policies, programmes and operational structures. Prohibitive costs of information and technology equipment and low levels of literacy among women are other limiting factors. Conflicting opinions and perspectives on social and cultural issues, politics, economics and other development issues in relation to gender, give the impression that women have no opinion or that they are not affected by these issues.

Whereas it is important to promote positive portrayal of women in the media coverage so as to enhance their participation in the development process, some media organizations fail to eliminate gender stereotypes and hence continue to perpetuate negative projections and image of women through talks, programs, news and advertisements.

The media has the potential to be more pro-active in developing an agenda that provides coverage that challenges conventional norms and values that continue to marginalize women.

Although government has tried to improve the communication infrastructure countrywide, a lot more needs to be done particularly in the rural areas. As a result of lack of efficient road transportation in such areas, bus operators are now reluctant to risk damaging their vehicles by poor road infrastructure. This is to the detriment of women and other poor people who depend on this mode of transportation. There also exist in some parts of the country absence of tele-communications, electronic mailing facilities and other forms of media. This situation hinders free access to information and vital services, in particular for women, children, and people with disabilities,

12.9.1. Policy Statement:

The Government will create a conducive environment for the improvement of communication infrastructure to allow equitable access of information for all levels, improve the participation of women and persons with disabilities in the media and address their negative portrayal.

12.9.2. Thematic Objectives:

- To ensure easy access to opportunities for the use of all forms of communication media (roads infrastructure, radio and telecommunication, electronic mail, and other media technology) by all members of the society.
- To increase the participation, access and control of all forms of media and communication technology.

12.9.3. Strategies:

- I. Sensitize and empower media personnel through enhancing their skills, knowledge and access to information technology so as to facilitate gender sensitive reporting.
- II. Support and strengthen positive reporting through building capacities of media personnel on gender analysis and gender mainstreaming.
- III. Promote effective dissemination of quality information through electronic and print media to people in rural areas.
- IV. Promote e-strategy in all sectors, e.g., e-government, e-learning, e-commerce, e-banking, etc
- V. Encourage women to use information technology for networking nationally, regionally and internationally.
- VI. Support actions to promote equal access of girls and boys, women and men to information technology.
- VII. Promote women's participation in senior management positions in the media.
- XI. Train men, women and children to use Information Technology

13. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

The institutional framework for implementing the National Gender Policy draws upon the experiences, skills and resources of existing structures within the Government as well as the non-governmental organisations and private sector.

13.1 The National Gender Machinery

The National Gender Machinery has since been placed under the Deputy Prime Minister's Office and renamed the Department of Gender and Family Issues Unit. With a National Gender Policy in place and the ongoing support provided by Government on gender issues, it is of great significance that the Department be given the appropriate authority and support to spearhead, generate interest, support and commitment both at national and international levels. The implementation of the Gender Policy will also require effective coordination, monitoring, networking and provision of technical support from all Government departments and cooperating agencies so that the process of advancing gender equity is carried out in a professional and efficient manner.

13.1.1 Gender Focal Teams (GFTs)

In view of the fact that gender is crosscutting, the government shall create Gender Focal Teams that will deal with issues relating to all government Ministries. The gender focal teams shall be charged with the responsibility of providing the critical link between their ministries and the National Gender Machinery and other national gender structures. Allocation of budget by sector ministries for the mainstreaming of gender within the sector will form one of the key indicators for assessing gender mainstreaming effort.

14. BUDGETING

The Government shall promote gender mainstreaming in national budgetary allocations so as to meet the needs of the targeted groups, and areas of intervention within the available national resources. This shall in particular be achieved by:

- (i) Ensuring that experts in gender budgeting form an integral part of the team responsible for the planning of national and sectoral budgets;
- (ii) Building the capacity of the Central Agencies and Gender Focal Teams in gender budgeting;
- (iii) Examining national and sectoral budgets to determine their gender sensitivity and gender responsiveness.

15. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A monitoring and evaluation system will be put in place to enhance accountability and effectiveness. The Gender and Family Issues Unit and the Gender Focal Teams and key institutions at different levels will be strengthened in support of the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of this Gender Policy. This shall include:

- Enhancement of gender planning and analysis skills.
- Enhancement and strengthening of key development practitioners in policy analysis, implementation, monitoring and evaluation skills.
- Equipping key actors with skills to determine and formulate gender sensitive monitoring indicators at planning stages of national development frameworks such as the NDS, PRSPs, MDG Reporting, and sectoral plans, programmes and activities.



NATIONAL GENDER POLICY

The printing of this publication was carried out with funding from the European Union and UNDP.