Goal 3 Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women

Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and in all levels of education by 2015.

Indicator: Ratio of girls to boy's primary education.

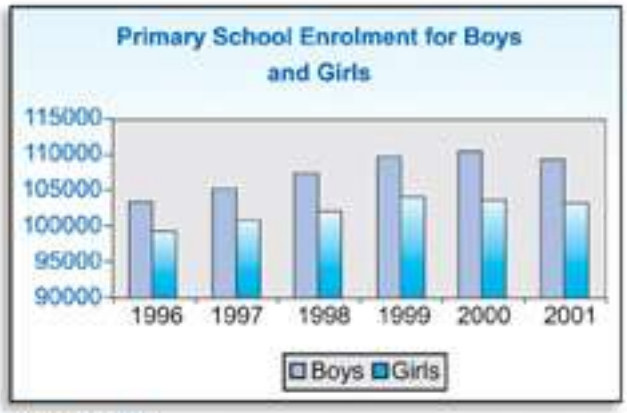
STATUS AT A GLANCE

Will the Goal/Target be Met			
Potentially	Unlikely	Insufficient Data	

State of Supportive Environment			
Strong	Fair	**Weak but improving**	Weak

Tracking improvements in Primary Education: Monitoring and Evaluation Environment

Elements of monitoring environment	Assessment		
Data gathering capacities	Strong	**Fair**	Weak
Quality of recent survey information	Strong	**Fair**	Weak
Statistical tracking capacities	Strong	**Fair**	Weak
Statistical analysis capacities	Strong	Fair	**Weak**
Capacity to incorporate statistical analysis into policy, planning and resource allocation mechanism	Strong	Fair	**Weak**
Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms	Strong	Fair	**Weak**



Source: CSO.

Status and Trends

The minority status of women has had an adverse effect on women's ability to gain access to productive resources such as land and credit. Ironically, some studies suggest that women are the major economic providers for their families, accounting for the bulk of agricultural labour. Of the approximate 88,000 rural households in Swaziland, women head more than 30 percent. Women head 25 percent of households in urban areas (CSO, Poverty Profile of Swaziland, 1995).

Certain customary practices have adverse implications for women's productive capacities. These practices also pose serious threats to women's ability to assert their sexual reproductive rights in the light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Cultural attitudes and practices also discourage women from participating in public life. As a result, few women occupy political decision-making positions.

School enrolment rates at the primary level are higher for boys than girls. Enrolment rates show only slight differences between girls and boys in secondary school enrolment figures. Several studies note that girls face additional problems at home, in school, and in their community's.

There has been an increase in the proportion of women in employment in both the public and private sectors. In 1992, women employment in the private sector stood at 29.8 percent whilst in the public sector the figure stood at 39.3 percent (CCA 2000). It should also be noted that women dominate the lower salary ranks where they occupy more support-related activities, as opposed to the managerial ones, despite the existence of laws such as the Employment Act, which prohibits sexual discrimination. Males dominate formal paid employment. Women (59 percent) dominate the informal sector.

The NDS recognizes gender equality and women empowerment as pillars of development. The government has tried to foster gender equality through legislative measures such as the Employment Act, the creation of institutional support structures such as SCOGWA and the Gender Unit.

Current developments include the ratification of CEDAW.

Major Challenges

- Entrenching a fully engendered constitutional framework that will guide efforts towards gender equality and women empowerment.
- Aspects of culture and socialization that perpetuate women subordination are hard to change.
- The dual legal system poses major challenges requiring the need to address the legal aspects that adversely affect women.
- There are an inadequate number of gender specialists in the public, private and NGO sectors.
- Inadequate political will is signified by delay in the ratification of CEDAW and the implementation of the SADC Gender and Development Declaration of 1997.
- Lack of gender awareness amongst policy-makers.
- The need to strengthen institutional mechanisms for fostering gender equality, as stipulated in the Beijing Plus 5 commitment.

Supportive Environment

- The NDS places gender equality and the empowerment of women at the center of development.
- The Employment Act prohibits sexual discrimination.
- Swaziland is a signatory to the ILO conventions that prohibit gender-based discrimination at the work-place.
- In 1994 the government established SCOGWA, forums where all major stakeholders come together to formulate policies and programmes for national action.
- The Gender Unit in the ministry of Home Affairs facilitated the development of a gender policy that was promulgated in 2002 and is currently awaiting cabinet approval.
- There are also various initiatives by NGO's and community-based groups on gender sensitization and training and the mainstreaming of gender into their programmes.
- Research has been conducted on laws and other issues that affect women.
- In 1997, Swaziland, signed a SADC Declaration on Gender and Development Declaration. All signatories agreed to work towards achieving 30 percent women representation in decision-making positions by 2005.
- CEDAW was approved by parliament and is awaiting ratification. Sensitization on the CEDAW has been undertaken with UNDP assistance. Law reform is currently underway to remove the minority status of women.
- The draft constitution is supportive to human rights including the rights of women.

Priorities For Development Assistance

- There is a need to establish gender desks in public, private, and NGOs institutions, and to support the training of specialists to mainstream gender in all organizational activities and programmes.
- There is a need to educate all stakeholders the importance of gender issues in order to ensure political commitment to effective programmes and plans of action.
- Support and strengthen networking through technical support and equipment.
- Education for the creation of a critical mass to effectively engage with the gender issues and to bring about transformation.
- Strengthen the Gender unit in the MOHA.