

# **Making Trade Work for Women**

The Likely Impact of the  
Economic Partnership Agreements on  
Women's Rights and Gender Equality

## **Beef Sector in Namibia**

July 2006

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# One World Action

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# Making Trade Work for Women

## The Likely Impact of the Economic Partnership Agreements on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

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## Abbreviations/Acronyms

ACP	African Caribbean and Pacific
AGOA	Africa Growth and Opportunity Act
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
BLNS	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia South Africa
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
EU	European Union
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
EPZ	Export Processing Zone
FTA	Free Trade Agreements
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRN	Government Republic of Namibia
HIV/AIDS	Human Immune-deficiency Virus Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
LaRRI	Labour Resource & Research Institution
LDC	Less Developed Countries
MAWRD	Ministry of Agriculture Water & Rural Development
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
MTP III	Medium Term Plan III
NDP	National Development Plan
NASSP	Namibia Agriculture Services Support Program
NSA	Non State Actors
NGO	Non Governmental Organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SOE	State Owned Enterprises
SPS	Sanitary and phytosanitary requirements
SSA	Sub Saharan Africa
Un	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
WASCOM	Wages and Salaries Commission
WTO	World Trade Organisation
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
TDCA	Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement

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# 1. Executive summary

This study examines the likely impact of the proposed Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) on women's livelihoods in Namibia. The focus of the study is on the beef industry, given its importance to the economy.

The main development challenges facing Namibia include the following:

- Rural women play a major role in ensuring household food security, yet do not have adequate access to and control over means of production. Furthermore, cultural perceptions and attitudes negatively influence the progressive empowerment of women.
- Unemployment and HIV/AIDS prevalence are increasing amongst women and young people. There is also an increase in female-headed and child-headed households due to migration and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
- Women are not well-represented in national and regional decision-making structures.
- There are gross inequalities between the rich and the poor and between communal and commercial farming sectors.
- The poor and the needy lack access to resources, services and opportunities and have become dependent on food aid.
- Women's organisations and other civil society organisations have embarked on income generating activities to diversify the livelihood sources of the poor; however, their efforts are not well coordinated and their impact is limited.
- Namibia has made progress in achieving some development targets it has set itself, but more coordination, strategic planning, resource mobilisation and proactive involvement of women's and men's organisations operating at the community level is critical for success and sustainability.
- The role of women in the beef sector is largely invisible and without structural policy changes, the situation of women may become worse.

What effect will the EPA have on Namibia's development? Our analysis suggests several potential problems:

- Increased competition. Formerly protected industries producing for the local, national and regional markets may find themselves unable to compete with duty free imported goods.
- Loss of import revenue. Import duties are still the main source of income for most SADC countries and revenue losses due to EPAs are calculated to be substantial, with potentially serious knock-on effects for the country's social welfare system.
- Poor inclusion of non-state actors and women in the negotiations. The effect is that the negotiation processes focus more on macro and intermediate level concerns for market access, reciprocity, subsidy etc. but do not explore implications for the poor.
- Meeting sanitary requirements. The country has been concerned about the EU standards for meat products as potential barriers to trade.
- The likely cumulative impacts of the EPA process on other regional trade agreements, such as the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) between the European Union and South Africa.

The impact of EPAs on the livelihood of the poor, especially rural women, who form the backbone of subsistence agriculture, is not clear. There are few statistics available on women's involvement in Namibian exports and imports, or on gender roles in the agricultural sector, cattle ownership or women's local trade activities. However, our case study of the beef sector suggests that despite being largely invisible, women do contribute to the industry. But the increased demand for Namibian beef through the EPAs could increase rural women's already heavy workloads as they herd and rear the cattle supplied to the local market. If their capacity is not built in terms of livestock ownership, management and marketing they will remain marginalised and EPAs may worsen rather than improve their livelihoods, especially if they aren't able to share in the benefits and revenue accruing to the beef trade.

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Namibia has a long way to go in order to address the multiple challenges discussed in this report. The country requires integrated and well-coordinated strategic interventions, which include the following:

- The trade negotiations should be enriched with various options to increase women's empowerment, such as strengthening their role in small stock rearing, income generation and informal marketing activities, as well as improving their status in terms of trading in goods and services.
- A comprehensive rural development strategy is needed to address the needs of rural women and other vulnerable groups. Agricultural services should be further decentralised to reach the needy, focus on simple low cost interventions, develop an appropriate technology base for women's agricultural and domestic tasks, target veterinary services to women, and involve women in research on improved crop varieties.
- Gender concerns need to be mainstreamed within the Namibian Government and throughout the EPA negotiation process. Gender disaggregated statistics are needed to reveal women's productive work in agriculture and other "informal spheres".
- Deliberate efforts must be made to engage civil society organisations supporting community-based enterprises in the EPA discussions and strategic planning forums such as the National Trade Forum.

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## 2. Introduction

Debates on the potential impact of Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) abound.<sup>1</sup> The European Union argues that EPAs will facilitate economic integration of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, which will eventually lead to poverty eradication. They argue that reciprocity in market access will increase competition and lead to economic growth and, to this end, EPAs are development-centred agreements designed to stimulate such growth.

On the other hand, critics argue that EPAs are simply free trade agreements designed to ensure EU access to developing country markets. They argue that EPAs will require ACP countries to provide reciprocal market access to EU imports on a time scale that will make it difficult for them to compensate for loss of government tariff revenues and deal with supply side constraints that prevent their producers competing successfully with EU imports.

There is a large amount of analysis to support the view that EPAs could undermine progress towards poverty reduction and development. It is argued that EPAs, in their current form, would lead to new and unfair trade areas between the EU and regional groupings of ACP countries by demanding reciprocity between unequal trading partners, undermining regional integration and reducing policy space that ACP countries need to develop their economies and eradicate poverty, resulting in loss of revenue which would affect delivery of public services. There are further concerns that the pace of negotiations does not take into account the capacity of ACP countries, and that participation in the negotiations by non-state actors is very limited. Such EPAs would negatively affect poor people, especially women, who are most vulnerable to rapid and increased trade liberalisation.

This report explores these assertions, with particular reference to women involved in the beef industry in Namibia.

### Methodology and approach

We used various research methodologies to gather information for this study. These included desk studies, key informant interviews with 12 representatives (drawn from key implementing agencies and institutions working closely in the beef industry, on trade and gender issues in Namibia) and a focus group discussion with one rural based women and

men's group made up of 21 participants. These methods were supplemented by telephone interviews with key and strategic informants not reachable for a face-to-face interview. We also used feedback from a consultative workshop with farmers in the Otjozondjupa region, a major livestock producing communal area, and staff from various institutions who have insight of the beef trade to refine the analysis and to evaluate existing trends, programmes and recommendations. Another rich source of information was the National Trade Forum meeting held by the Ministry of Trade and Industry on 2nd March 2006. Supporting data is compiled in the appendices.

### Limitations

One of our key constraints was the limited time allocated for conducting the research, rendering it difficult to meet with some of the targeted key informants. Also the lack of sufficient data on the latest list of possible items to liberalized, and the perceived limited role women currently play in the beef industry has limited the scope and breadth of our analysis. The focus of the study, which was required to be on the beef industry, has limited our scope in terms of exploring the likely impact EPAs on the livelihoods of women in the other sectors.

Nevertheless, we present and analyse Namibia's socio-economic context, including gender concerns and implications; we outline the current role of rural women in the livestock sector; we present national initiatives to address gender inequality and poverty; we outline the key principles of the EPAs and we assess the key challenges for Namibia's involvement in the current negotiations. We finish by making some recommendations for ensuring that the process does not further marginalise the poor, especially women.

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<sup>1</sup> Namibia, as a member of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) grouping of countries, is negotiating a reciprocal preferential trade agreement with the European Union. Under the Cotonou Agreement, ACP countries will have to offer the EU tariff-free access to their own markets under the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).



# 3. Namibia: a synopsis from a gender perspective

Namibia is a large country, covering 824,000 km<sup>2</sup>, but with one of the lowest population densities in the world (2.1 persons per square kilometre). However, this figure belies the immense regional variation in population density. Water availability is a major determinant of settlement patterns. Rural inhabitants are concentrated around the perennial rivers which form the country's northern border; around seasonal rivers and floodplains, such as the Cuvelai system in the Ovambo regions; and along human-made pipelines and water systems, such as the Eastern National Water Carrier, which supplies residents in the otherwise dry areas in eastern and central Namibia. Namibia shares borders with South Africa, Botswana, Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In 2001 its population was 1.8 million.

Since it gained independence in 1990, Namibia has made considerable strides towards improving the lives of its rural population. Provision of water, construction and upgrading of roads, and a revitalised health and education system have all been priorities of the national government. With the election of local and regional authorities in December 1992, many Namibians had local representation for the first time.<sup>2</sup> However, in addition to service provisions, the nation faces the complex challenge of promoting viable economic development for rural people. A century of colonial practices of land dispossession, exploitation of labour and underdevelopment has resulted in impoverished black rural areas. Both the German and South African colonisers created ethnically-based reserves (Box 1) and restricted movement into the settler zone in order to limit productivity of African farmers and to force rural men to provide cheap labour for mines, commercial farms, fishing enterprises and urban businesses. The features of the labour reserve economy persist today. In some regions, the prevalence of outward migration has resulted in rural households consisting mainly of the elderly, women and young children (FAO, 1995).

Nearly 80% of the population of Namibia is engaged in agriculture. The commercial farming sector consists of 44% of the agriculturally useable land. The communal farming sector consists of 41% of the agricultural land and accommodates approximately 64% of the population – of which an estimated 90% are dependent on subsistence agriculture for a living. Livestock constitutes the major source of livelihood. The main crops are maize, millet and wheat. The achievement of national food self-sufficiency is a major economic strategy of the country (FAO, 1995).

## Box 1. Land distribution and the historical legacy

The racially biased land policies have greatly skewed population distribution. Just over 4,000 farmers, primarily white, control 44% of agriculturally useable land. In contrast, 67% of the population currently resides in communal areas, comprising only 41% of agricultural land, not all of which is useable. Although allocation of land within these areas remains communally based, the regions themselves are largely colonial creations. In the north, the German and South African regimes approximated existing boundaries to confine people to the reserves. In the south and east people were removed, by war or apartheid practices, to marginal areas. These policies ensured that settlers owned the superior grazing land in the central areas. The subsequent shortage of land and labour created a dual agricultural system: on the one hand black subsistence farming, in which women constitute the majority of producers and white commercial farming, in which black farm workers provide the bulk of labour on the other.

## Women in Namibia

The situation for women in Namibia, especially in the livestock sector, cannot be understood without reference to the historical and political context and economic and social conditions of the country. Specifically, this entails an understanding of the on-going effects of pre-independence apartheid society as it constructed women's lives in terms of race and gender; of varying traditional practices among different cultures and geographical locations; and of the differences between urban and rural areas. Gender disaggregated statistical data for many aspects of social and economic life in Namibia do not exist. Therefore, this analysis draws upon research done by various agencies including the UN, the National Planning Commission reports, census reports and well-substantiated information from the different individuals working in the area.

Gender inequality is evident in Namibia due to the impact of cultural practices, which subordinated women in all spheres of life. This has been reinforced by the

<sup>2</sup> The country's decentralisation policy aims to transfer political, administrative, legislative, financial and planning authority from the centre to the community levels to ensure public participation and delivery of services in an efficient and effective manner (UNDP, 2004).

colonial practices of racial and male domination. Although many households rely heavily on the remittances or wages of family members employed in urban areas, the responsibilities for food production and preparation and the overall well-being of the household continue to fall on women. The 1991 census revealed that women account for 59% of all those engaged in skilled and subsistence agricultural work. Indeed, rural females comprise the largest demographic group in Namibia. Yet they remain disadvantaged by unequal access to land, labour, agricultural services and assets, natural resources and employment opportunities. Rural women are also under-represented in decision-making and leadership positions.

Policies have yet to adequately take account of the multiple roles of Namibian women as farmers, food providers and income earners. Effective policy reforms are in part constrained by the dearth of gender-based statistics and qualitative research on gender roles and relations.

Cultural and traditional practices are more entrenched in rural settings due to lack of exposure to development processes, critical analysis of their situation and therefore perpetuates gender inequality in terms of decision making, access to services and opportunities, access to and control over resources and benefits. Female-headed households (Box 2) are said to be the poorest sections of the population (Government of Namibia, 2001). Significant numbers of women are engaged in informal trading, especially in urban settings, but support mechanisms are weak and ineffective.

The health and well being of the majority of children in Namibia is integrally tied to women's roles as farmers and food producers. However, recent regional studies suggest that as many as 40% of households are food insecure. In Namibia, household food security derives from two sources: the production and food stores of the household from agriculture and food gathering; and the ability of households to purchase or acquire food, either from cash income, food transfers or bartering.

## **Box 2. Female-headed households**

Households headed by women constitute a significant portion of the food insecure. Definitions of what constitutes a household, as well as criteria for determining if the head is a female, vary widely. Some surveys have distinguished between *de jure* heads, women recognized within civil or customary law as the official head, and *de facto* heads, women who are in charge in the absence of a male head. Although comprehensive data is limited, regional figures and the national census suggest that between 30 and 50% of households are effectively female-headed (FAO, 1994).

Far from being homogeneous, female-headed households display a range of composition patterns and socio-economic characteristics. It must also be stressed that a focus on female-headed households masks the vulnerability of single mothers and young married couples, often part of male-headed households.

Migration has created many female-headed households with a shortage of adult labour, often resulting in a decline in food productivity. Women must often make up the loss through additional work in the field, including intensive tasks such as tilling and clearing. Data on land holdings is sparse, but several recent surveys in the Ovambo Region show that although size of land between male and female-headed households is comparable, the amount cultivated is often lower for the latter. Even in regions where gender ratios are equal, women still outnumber men in agriculture. In the south, labour shortages are less problematic; however, many able-bodied youths do not contribute fully to agricultural activities (FAO, 1994).

Shortage of labour is exacerbated by the higher dependency ratios present in female-headed households. According to the 1991 census, female-headed households are comparable in size to those headed by males, but support more children. Thus, while female-headed households support more dependants, they have smaller households and therefore fewer able-bodied members to assist with agricultural and domestic tasks. Although school children do contribute to household chores, they are likely to be a net drain. Households who can send their children away to school further benefit from school feeding programmes.

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Yet another factor affecting women's ability to procure food is the declining natural resource base. The quality of land is deteriorating, women lack fertiliser, implements and the technical know-how to boost the productive potential of their fields. Drought is an ever-present threat for communal farmers, whose harvests, in the absence of agricultural inputs, depend even more directly on good rainfall. In the non-crop producing regions, stock-farming households must contend with drought and poor grazing which directly reduce the availability of milk for home consumption. Wild fruits and vegetables, riverine fish, and small animals enhance food security during times of relatively good supply and provide an important buffer for poor households during times of food shortage. However, increasing deforestation and erosion, including along rivers, unsustainable harvesting, and increasing population pressure are shrinking the availability of these foods (FAO, 1994).

## Division of labour and decision-making

The health and well being of household members not only rests on the availability of food; household food security is also related to distribution of food and income within the household. Indeed, the very notion of the household as a production unit tends to gloss over competing interests and the uneven access and control over resources within the household. The right and ability of women to control the products of their own labour is central to the advancement of rural women in Namibia.

Namibia is no exception to the gender division of labour, which characterises rural communities throughout the world. Women carry out the bulk of domestic and agricultural duties, while men are responsible for specific spheres of activity, such as herding and marketing livestock, ploughing fields, or constructing homes. Men are more likely to allocate or share specific tasks with others, or take on tasks that utilise higher levels of technology, such as animal-drawn traction. In contrast, women are more likely to be engaged in the actual work itself.

Few studies have assessed the allocation of time and work responsibility within rural households, and information on the division of labour among different ethnic groups remains somewhat superficial. The economic value of women's work remains

underrepresented in research. In contrast, the growing system of casual labour offers some evidence of the productive value of women's labour (although this is clearly not reflected in amounts of payment). Even less consideration is given to women's roles as mothers and caretakers. These roles not only exert physical demands, but also entail ongoing planning, attention and emotional demands (FAO, 1995).

The division of labour currently present in most Namibian groups has been distorted by ongoing social and economic change. For example, the transformation of rural economies from agriculturally-based to income-based has increased the workload of women. As noted above, women often make up for the lost input of absentee husbands or family members by taking on additional tasks. Interestingly, as the participation of men in farming activities decreases, the authority of women over agricultural processes may increase. More information is needed to understand the role of men and women in making choices concerning field preparation, seed selection, or care of livestock. Even in male-headed households, northern women appear to have some say in deciding which crops to grow and when to plant.

The field studies, through focus groups discussions in Okakarara, have revealed that women are increasingly responsible for livestock production, traditionally a male domain. The study found that in 22% of households, women are the principal person in charge of cattle. In the southern and eastern communal areas, women are responsible for milking and lambing and exercise control over these processes. In the south, where small stock predominates, women also make decisions about herding and grazing (see Chapter 6).

The entry of rural households into commercial activities also increases the labour burden on women. In households able to achieve marketable surpluses, women must ensure subsistence output and contribute to cash crop production. If women have access to the additional income, then the returns to increased labour can be worthwhile. However, rural women in Namibia continue to have an unequal say in decision-making over agricultural production. Women are expected to use their harvest to feed the family, and in some regions, women even farm both individual plots for subsistence and common plots in which men control the harvest. In de facto female-headed households, the husband's absence does not necessarily increase a woman's freedom to make decisions. She might be entitled to sell produce on an informal scale, but for more significant decisions, such

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as hiring labour, she defers to her husband. Women exert even less authority over the sale and disposal of livestock. Men dominate the marketing and slaughter of stock, and although they may confer with their wives, it is men who negotiate prices. In a husband's absence, a woman is expected to consult with his relatives. Reportedly, many women in the Eastern and Southern Communal Areas still wield no control over the sale of animals *they themselves own*. Moreover, if her animals are sold in a lot, her husband can determine the share she receives (FAO, 1995)

Agricultural policies and programmes continue to overlook the central role of women in agriculture and reinforce inequality in women's access to:

1. productive resources, including land, labour, inputs and technology; and
2. support services, such as credit, extension and research.

Moreover, the failure to acknowledge women's agricultural knowledge and experience makes gender divisions over decision-making even more pronounced. Ultimately, policies must go beyond simply improving services to exploring ways to enhance women's legal and social ability to take up services.

## HIV/AIDS

The high prevalence of HIV/AIDS is one of the key challenges facing independent Namibia, and is attributed to the low status of women. For cultural reasons women are denied access to employment and resources which makes them in turn economically dependent on men and therefore exposed to risky sexual relations (UNAM Baseline Survey, 2002). The country had a population growth rate of 3.1% per annum in the decade before independence. However, the impact of HIV/AIDS has reduced the growth rate to 2.6% per annum and life expectancy declined from 61 in 1991 to 49 in 2001. It has dropped differently for women and men; from 63 to 50 for women and from 59 to 48 for men.

## Mechanisms to promote the advancement of women

In the country as a whole, women's participation in decision-making has increased considerably since independence. A Ministry of Gender and Child Welfare was established and a "good" percentage of women are currently Members of Parliament. Women account for 40% of all local councillors with many being mayors, deputy mayors and governors. This was made possible by legally binding quotas for women on party lists to enhance their participation. A similar action would be required if businesswomen with the interest and potential could be supported to participate in trade fairs and trade discussions.

Nevertheless, women remain underrepresented in leadership positions, and also in the private sector. For example, only five out of 25 women are Cabinet Ministers, there is no political party headed by a woman, there are only 12 out of 107 female Regional Councillors countrywide and six of the 13 regions have no women at all on their regional councils (Dr. Debie LeBeau and Eunice Iipinge (Feb 2004) in Namibia's Progress towards Gender Equality: Post-Beijing Policies and Programmes. Namibia Institute for Democracy).

These structures for decentralised decision-making are critical in enabling women to understand their role in economic development and to help mobilise a critical mass of trade analysts to support the course of women in terms of strengthening their role in production and trade.

In order to address gender specific constraints, the government formulated a National Gender Policy and Gender Mainstreaming Programme in November 1997 to ensure that women become part and parcel of any development planning. More importantly, since independence in 1990, the government has taken significant steps to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Namibian constitution includes a number of provisions that guarantee the status of women.

The Department of Women Affairs (DWA) was established in 1990 in the Office of the President with the mandate to facilitate the inclusion of gender issues into national development, advocate for policies and legislation which are gender-sensitive, coordinate the gender-related activities of government ministries, and provide a point of contact between government, NGOs and donors promoting gender issues. It has

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been successful in including gender sector by sector in the National Development Plan for 1995-2000, rather than as a separate section on Women in Development. The Department is constrained, however, by a small budget and staff, lack of representative or observer status in the Cabinet, and an insufficient capacity to fully address the priorities of rural women in development policy and planning.

Recognising that women's interests are not often addressed in many rural organisations, some NGOs are encouraging women to form separate associations and co-operatives. A number of church-related organisations, in which women are very active, run development projects for rural women.

Namibia is a signatory to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Constitution of Namibia guarantees equal rights for women and provides for affirmative action to redress past imbalances. However, the Constitution also states that all laws in force at independence remain in force until repealed or amended by Parliament, and that customary and common laws also remain valid, as long as they do not conflict with the Constitution or statutory laws. Thus many discriminatory laws that affect rural women remain intact, including those that limit women's control over property and access to land and credit.



## 4. The economy, trade and poverty

### “Namibia produces what it cannot consume and consumes what it cannot produce”

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry, 2006.<sup>3</sup>

The Namibian economy depends heavily on trade and has therefore maintained a liberal trade regime with the aim of integrating the national economy into the world economy. This explains Namibia’s commitment to getting the maximum benefit out of the Economic Partnership Agreements with the EU (pers. comm. Theo Uvanga, MDG/GCAP Coordinator, 2005).

The economy is highly dependent on the production and export of primary resources. These sectors, particularly mining and fisheries, have not been doing well lately given the volatile currency fluctuations. National economic policies are guided by maintaining budget deficits of less than 3% and a debt of 25% of the GDP, and through the linking of the Namibian Dollar to the South African Rand, inflation stands at 6-7% per annum.

The Bank of Namibia recently reported a decline in the economy as the GDP for the second quarter of 2005 fell 1.1% compared to 4.1% recorded between January and March for the same year. The recent decline is essentially due to the poor performance of most sectors, combined with global market forces. Another factor is the failure of government to control expenditure and an estimated cash flow deficit amounting to N\$491.7 million.

Namibia has an annual average per capita income of around US\$1790 and on income alone is ranked 65th out of 175 countries. However, on the Human Development Index (HDI), which combines income with indicators of health and education, Namibia slides down to position 124. This reflects the disparity shown in Namibia’s most recent Gini coefficient of 0.7, indicating that Namibia has one of the most unequal distributions of wealth of any nation.

Although Namibia can maintain national food security through domestic production and food imports, it however has the key challenge of promoting household food security in terms of enabling the majority of the poor to access and afford available food supplies through the local marketing network. More than 600,000 beneficiaries were targeted for food distribution in 2002/03. For the majority of poor Namibians, food aid has become a significant source of livelihood, as many households have few resources and limited opportunities to change their situation. Many Namibians identified unemployment and lack of job opportunities as a major problem in contributing

to household food insecurity. Statistics show the following:

1. The unemployment rate amongst the 20-24 age group is said to be 42%
2. 34% of the labour force is unemployed
3. Unemployment is higher in rural areas than urban areas
4. Unemployment is higher for women (39%) than for men (31%)

(Source: UNDP, 2004)

Equally importantly, the rate of migration into towns is influenced by lack of employment opportunities in rural areas. More women (51.7%) have migrated to urban centres than men (48.3%) over the last few years and women are employed more in casual, low skilled and lower paid jobs than men (!Nara *A Gendered Perspective*, 2003). The impact of the slow economic growth implies that the benefits for the poorest, the jobless and the most vulnerable are limited. The only way that progress could be made is in combining interventions aimed at promotion of economic growth while reducing income inequality. One of the ways through which it is seen to create more jobs and improve the livelihoods of the poor is to increase trade. This position is maintained by the EU: “While EPAs will build on WTO disciplines, they will, at the same time, go beyond these disciplines in order to help ACP’s in their economic and social development and their fight against poverty”. (F.J. Ortiz de Zúñiga, (2001-2002.) EC Activity Review)

However, there is no guarantee that increases in foreign investment will alleviate or eradicate poverty. This is evident from the experiences of the Ramatex Textile factory, set up in an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) in Namibia in 2000 under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) agreement. Women are the majority of employees in this plant but because of its EPZ status the factory has further impoverished residents of the City of Windhoek who have to foot its electricity and water bills (the factory is exempt from paying). The city has to recoup these funds and they do so by hiking tariffs for services at least twice a year. In addition the factory has, since its inception, been guilty of gross labour law violations. They pay the majority of the Namibian workers a N\$300-N\$400 (£35.7) monthly wage while the workers are subjected to long working hours, no overtime pay, no annual leave and no benefits such as travel allowance, medical aid and so on (pers. comm., Theo Uvanga, NDT).

<sup>3</sup> Statement made in his presentation on the “Possible implications of the 6th WTO Ministerial Conference” 02 March 2006, Windhoek.

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## Poverty challenges

Namibia, like many other countries in Southern Africa, faces a devastating combination of three interrelated crises: AIDS, food insecurity and weak institutional capacities. Women are at the heart of this crisis. These 'triple threats' undermine the development potential of countries in the region. In order to revitalise development prospects, the spread of HIV/AIDS must be stopped (contained) and the impacts of AIDS must be mitigated in order to stop the erosion of capacities of families to feed themselves and of institutions to provide essential services. Food security must be strengthened to bolster immunities, alleviate poverty in the face of AIDS and reinforce familial and institutional capacities to deal with the crises. And institutions must be directly reinforced against impacts of HIV/AIDS to prevent the collapse of governance and the economy.

Government has rolled out the Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) and continues to intensify the provision of Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (PMTCT) to infants born to infected mothers. The right to a decent standard of living remains a dream for many Namibians. One third of the population was identified as in need of humanitarian food assistance in 2003 and four in ten Namibians were living below the poverty line. Among rural households, 58% inhabit thatch or grass structures while one third had mud or clay floors, 77% had access to radio and only 22% had access to telephones and 2% to computers. A quarter of households and less than 5% of rural households were using electricity as their main source of energy for cooking (UNDP, 2004). Thirty-eight percent of households live in relative poverty and 9% in extreme poverty. Relative and extreme poverty are defined as households spending 60 – 80% respectively of their total incomes on food. The right to health and life is increasingly being challenged as a result of increasing poverty levels, growing and skewed income disparities and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The challenges to the fulfilment of the right to health and life include the slow progress in reducing child mortality, high rates of maternal mortality, increasing HIV prevalence and the morbidity and mortality due to malaria and tuberculosis. Malaria remains the lead cause of illness and death in Namibia with TB second and AIDS following positions. (It is to be noted that TB does not necessarily kill and therefore people die of TB because of its association to HIV/AIDS but mostly death certificates only reflects cause of death as TB because of stigma).

## Development planning in Namibia

The Namibian policy agenda has been guided by the following key strategic plans and processes with support from its own revenue base, but also with technical and financial support from national, regional and international partners:

- The National Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Programme
- The National Agriculture Policy
- The National Gender Policy and its Gender Mainstreaming Programme
- The National Population Policy
- The Social Developmental Policy
- Vision 2030

The primary guiding tool is the country's Vision 2030 (Namibia Vision 2030 (2004), Office of the President), which aims to transform the country from a lower middle-income one to an industrialised nation by 2030. The vision gives impetus and meaning to the traditional National Development Plans (NDPs), which articulate priorities and provide focus for government over a given timeframe. Since their inception in 1995, these plans have identified poverty, unemployment and income inequality as major threats to economic development.

The national objectives guiding development planning in Namibia are:

- To reduce poverty
- To create employment
- To promote economic empowerment
- To stimulate and sustain economic growth
- To reduce inequalities in income distribution
- To reduce regional development inequalities
- To promote gender equality and equity
- To enhance environmental and ecological sustainability
- To combat the further spread of HIV/AIDS

Two key interventions, the poverty reduction strategy and the millennium development goals, are discussed below.

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## Poverty reduction strategy

The Namibian Poverty Reduction Strategy is based on four priority areas considered critical for poverty reduction. These are:

1. Creation of a long-term vision for Namibia as a prosperous nation through development of a transport and manufacturing capacity within Southern Africa, investing in education and health.
2. New ways to generate income amongst poor communities through promotion of agriculture, tourism and small to medium enterprise development.
3. Safety nets for the poor and those at risk.
4. Effective use of public resources through better design and targeting of existing programmes to ensure that their impact on poverty reduction is intensified.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy acknowledges that poverty concerns are multidimensional and suggests that the design of projects and programmes should be based on the following key principles to ensure that impact is sustainable, effective, equitable and efficient:

- Establish effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess impact of interventions with full participation of the poor
- Ensure accountability and transparency as regards resource utilisation
- Strengthen existing capacities and capabilities
- Promote inter agency cooperation through appropriate structures and procedures
- Design effective communication strategies through project updates, progress and evaluation reports
- Promote participation by the poor in political and administrative processes to influence policy directives, budget priorities and programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- Promote good governance for efficient management of poverty reduction programmes
- Ensure policy harmonisation by avoiding duplication

- Use careful targeting measures, which will ensure equity, effectiveness and efficiency in assisting the most vulnerable
- Ensure gender responsiveness by ensuring that the needs and potential of women and men are addressed

Vulnerable and poor women and men, young people, female-headed households and those in the informal sector are key targets of the programme.

A first review of the National Poverty Reduction Programme was undertaken in April-July 2004. This revealed some key constraints:

- Lack of gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming in the Action Programme
- Lack of accurate baseline information for some sectors, implying that indicators and targets were based on assumptions rather than on facts, making impact assessment difficult
- Majority of sectors have not effectively implemented the Programme due to lack of capacity (human and financial) within the sectors
- Lack of a coordinated approach to programme planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Although the Poverty Reduction Action Programme clearly specifies the need for gender mainstreaming, the programme does not define how to strengthen women's role in the agriculture sector, especially through research and support services, which in turn means that the implementation of the EPAs may not reduce poverty since no clear directives come from the existing programme.



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## Millennium Development Goals

The Millennium Development Goals are one of the core instruments for addressing Namibia's multiple problems in collaboration with its development partners. Namibia has made progress towards achieving a number of MDGs related to education, women's representation in decision making bodies, health and access to safe water. However, areas such as HIV/AIDS and development assistance have been getting worse, while progress has been slow in access to and control over resources, in literacy rates and women's empowerment (see Annex 1 for progress to date towards set targets).

Although clear progress is being made, gender concerns remain one of the key problem areas due to gender imbalances in decision-making structures and due to cultural and social attitudes towards women and their roles in society.

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# 5. The Economic Partnership Agreements and Trade

Namibia is a member of two regional groupings: SACU (Southern African Customs Union) and SADC (Southern African Development Community). All countries in these groups belong to the grouping of African, Caribbean and Pacific states (ACP) and are members of the Cotonou Agreement. The Cotonou Agreement grants the former European colonies preferential and non-reciprocal access to the European markets. In order to comply with the World Trade Organisation, the ACP countries are required to enter into negotiations of free trade agreements with the European Union (EU). This gave rise to the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), which call for the liberalisation of trade between the EU and ACP countries.

The Economic Partnership Agreement has three main objectives:

1. Economic development
2. The reduction and eventual eradication of poverty and
3. The smooth and gradual integration of ACP states into the world economy.

The rationale of this EU approach is that the EPAs will facilitate the economic integration of ACP countries and ensure sustainable economic and social development, which will eventually eradicate poverty. Reciprocity in market access is also predicted to increase competition and lead to economic growth. The EPAs will also reduce and eventually eradicate the donor dependence characteristic of the traditional EU-ACP relationship. This is translated into development cooperation (financial and technical assistance), trade (via EPAs), political dimensions and democratic governance, including gender equality. The agreement makes explicit reference to gender mainstreaming into all strategic processes, projects, programmes and activities.

Regarding the market access to the European Union, most of Namibia's basic mineral exports are allowed duty free access to the European Union market regardless of the trade regime in place. These exports, which account for over 25% of Namibian exports, will largely be unaffected by the nature of future trade arrangements with the European Union.

However, in the European Union, both agriculture and fisheries products are seen as sensitive and as a consequence high levels of tariff protection and even quantitative restrictions within trade preferences are

commonly used to manage access to the European markets. Against this background, the major issues Namibia faces in negotiating future trade arrangements with the European Union will include:

1. Maintaining existing tariff preferences for beef exports beyond 2008
2. Maintaining existing tariff preferences for fisheries exports, within Namibia's existing policy framework,
3. Improving existing trade preferences for beef products to allow customs duty, quota and special duty-free export of a wider range of beef and meat products, without excessive administrative and sanitary restrictions.

The EPA negotiations also comprise topics such as government procurement, protection of intellectual property, investment and services. The EU tries to push these issues on a bilateral basis since it cannot push them through the WTO. (Stevens, 2003, *"Multilateralism, Regionalism, Bilateralism: Which Way?"*) To avoid the over extension of SADC countries in manifold trade negotiations as well as the impression that EPAs are a rather neo-colonial tool, the EU has to have a strong self interest in supporting Southern African countries to build capacities in trade related areas and to upgrade their institutional capacities.

## Main challenges for Namibia in the EPA negotiations

The following are key characteristics of the Namibian situation, which will affect the nature of Namibia's participation in the EPA process, as well as other regional or bilateral arrangements.

## Increased competition

Some gender advocates, researchers, trade analysts and observers interpret the goal of the Economic Partnership Agreements to be unrestricted access of EU products into the ACP countries such that local producers, manufacturers and service producers will face competition from subsidised European imports and companies (APRODEV, 2003).

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Additionally, it should be noted that while the introduction of a reciprocal basis of duty free access for EU exports would bring economic benefits, it could also involve economic costs. The benefits might include:

- making imports cheaper, bringing benefits to consumers and traders
- making imported intermediate goods cheaper, bringing benefits to certain processors and manufactures
- stimulating more competitive patterns of production within ACP countries.

However, the disadvantages may include adjustment costs, which arise when formerly protected industries producing for the local, national and regional markets face competition from duty free goods and find themselves unable to compete. This lack of competitiveness, unless addressed, can lead to factory and farm closures and job losses. The extent of these impacts will depend on the ability of industries to respond to this increased competition.

Most of the ACP countries have small populations, are remote from European markets and face major constraints in developing their trade and production structures. General economic theory suggests that where market integration occurs between geographically distant countries with economies of radically different levels of development and size, the benefits tend to accrue disproportionately to the more developed party, while the costs tend to be carried disproportionately by the less developed party.

As a result of the developing nature of ACP economies, a range of constraints face ACP producers in their efforts to produce competitively for world markets. These constraints include the unreliable provision of public utilities (electricity and water supply), poor public infrastructure (run down roads and railways), weak institutional and policy frameworks leading to fluctuating exchange rates, high inflation and interest rates and low labour productivity (arising from poor education, health and housing provision).

Namibia is a deficit food producing country in terms of cereal production and has to import some food to supplement local food production; this already has implications for women farmers who maintain the subsistence crop production sector, which is currently marginalised. Importing subsidised products from the EU and elsewhere will further detract from any local

initiatives attempting to improve on current production levels even if it is only for home consumption. The question therefore is whether current negotiation processes consider possible mitigation strategies such as agro processing industries, strengthening community conservancies etc.

## Loss of import revenue

The existing free trade area agreement between the EU and South Africa (see Box 3) will result in the progressive introduction of duty free access for around 86% of current EU exports to the SACU market, including Namibia. This will involve the introduction of duty free trade on 83% of the EU's current agricultural exports.

The loss of revenue by the SADC countries in implementing the reciprocal trade relations with their main trading partner will be a major problem. Import duties are still the main source of income for most SADC countries and revenue losses due to EPAs are calculated to be substantial (McKay et al., 2000; Trade Centre). In addition, the origins of imports have to be checked, which requires additional managerial expertise. The EU should grant assistance that helps the countries to improve customs processing, restructure their income sources, and shift towards indirect taxation.

Namibia is one of the few countries in the world, which allocates more than 20% of its annual budget to social services. Women constitute the majority of the population that benefit from social services provision such as health and education etc. The anticipated revenue losses through SACU risk reducing much needed provision for social services.

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## Inclusion of non-state actors

The presence of non-state actors (NSAs), including women's organisations, is not visible in the current negotiations. In terms of consultation, the Namibian Trade Forum was established last year and met in December 2005 and again in March 2006, and a number of NSAs attended the meeting, including the Namibia Development Trust, National Economic Society, private sector representatives and business partners. However, the National Trade Forum lacks representation from the Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare and key women's NGOs such as Women's Action for Development. The result is that the negotiation processes focus more on macro and intermediate level concerns for market access, reciprocity, subsidy etc. but do not break down such discussions to implications for the poor. However, at the regional level, the head of the EPA negotiation team is a woman, based at the SADC secretariat in Botswana and the lead ministry (Trade and Industry) has a number of women in the strategic directorates (International Trade Relations and the Trade Policy division).

The negotiation process will only contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction and have other benefits if discussions and national interventions by government can take into consideration issues at the micro level such as women's role in small stock development, the informal sector, goods and services etc.

It is true that the government only facilitates the trade agenda and that the private sector plays a key role. However, it is necessary that the government in its facilitation role proactively supports community based civil society organisations which support income generating activities towards women's empowerment and also ensure women voices are heard. The private sector is primarily concerned with profit making and competition, but the social development agenda should not be neglected in this process.

## Dealing with farming subsidies

Farming subsidies in developed countries are obstacles to free trade with the developing countries. Governments in rich countries are paying over \$300 billion each year to subsidise their agricultural sectors, six times the total amount of aid to developing countries (ACTIONAID, Aug 2002 Media Release). The

WTO rules permit the OECD countries to provide massive support to their agricultural sector. This is exacerbated by the fact that rich countries are seen to be increasing these subsidies while at the same time developing countries have been forced to reduce or eliminate their subsidies under pressure from the international donors. These subsidies simply increase the gap between the rich and poor countries. In Namibia, the income inequality has already taken its toll. In essence, farm subsidies will:

- undermine the livelihoods of poor and small scale farmers
- distort trade and lead to depressed prices
- make EU farm products artificially competitive on world markets
- result in the dumping of cheap subsidised produce in poor countries.

## Meeting sanitary requirements

The country has been concerned about the EU standards for meat products as potential barriers to trade. In response the EC has been supporting capacity building development projects related to sanitary and phytosanitary requirements as well as awareness and information campaigns on opportunities provided through regional and multilateral discussions. To further support greater trade liberalisation, a number of programme interventions have been put in place, including the Namibia Trade and Regional Integration Programme, the Economic Integration Support Programme in support of SACU and Namibia Agricultural Services Support Programme. The latter programme expands agricultural marketing and builds Namibia's capacities in agricultural trade negotiations, which includes assistance to farmer organisations to promote public dialogue. Equally important is the newly launched rural poverty reduction programme under EDF 9 which aims at institutional capacity building for rural development, infrastructure development (roads, water supplies) and small scale enterprise development (on farm and off farm projects) for poor households. Its emphasis is to mainstream gender, HIV/AIDS and environmental concerns into all programme formulation processes, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

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## Impact of regional trade agreements

Namibia is not only affected by the impact of liberalisation of agreements of which it is part, but through its membership of SACU it will also feel the impact of the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) between the European Union and South Africa (see Box 4). The TDCA has raised concerns about the revenue loss from customs revenue channelled through SACU and increased competition.

### Box 3. Trade Development and Cooperation Agreement

When South Africa entered into a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the European Union in 2000, the Trade Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) locked neighbouring Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland (the BLNS countries) into its liberalisation schedule with the EU. Although the BLNS countries' trade relations with the EU are fixed under the non-reciprocal Cotonou Agreement, they have to implement the TDCA liberalisation schedule. BLNS countries do not have the capacity to monitor indirect imports from the EU into their countries. Furthermore, trade is supposed to flow freely within SACU and shall not be hampered by intra-regional trade controls.

The TDCA liberalisation schedule implies several challenges for BLNS countries, such as substantial revenue losses and increased competition in the European and South African market for several products, such as poultry, dairy products, flour based products, canned fruits and jam and sugar based products. As the TDCA makes clear that no additional protection measures will be discussed but only further liberalisation, there is no room for the BLNS to negotiate on this matter, save the option to improve the safeguard provisions of the TDCA. This is important considering the fact that BLNS countries have a high dependency on the agriculture sector, which is seen as an important factor for poverty alleviation (African Development Bank 2002)

Currently, the BLNS countries cannot apply directly for safeguard measures under the TDCA but only through South Africa (TDCA, Art.24.3). The official accession to the TDCA would therefore improve BLNS countries' ability to defend their agricultural sector in case of 'serious disturbance' through European imports (TDCA, Art. 16).

The reduction in the customs revenue is expected to negatively affect Namibia's balance of payments (BOP) and the level of foreign reserves. The fall in SACU revenue will have severe fiscal pressure and may lead to increases in budget deficits and public debts.

Analysis to date suggests that in Namibia, the following sectors producing for the local and regional markets could adversely be affected by the implementation of the EU-South Africa trade agreement.

- meat and meat products
- dairy products
- flour
- flour based products beer
- specialist alcohol

A SADC-EC Regional Preparatory Task Force has been set up to ensure that there are interlinkages and complementarities between development strategies and the EPAs. The main role of the Task Force is to identify key constraints/needs and translate them into development assistance programmes. Equally importantly, the Economic Integration Support Programme to SACU was intensified in 2005 and has provided assistance for establishing the secretariat and Tariff Board in Windhoek and the ad hoc Tribunal and National Bodies as well as to provide support to member states and private sector to address likely impacts of the Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement between EU and South Africa.

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## 6. Impact on women: a case study from the beef sector<sup>4</sup>

The issues raised in the EPA negotiation process, such as market access, reciprocity, competition on sensitive products and subsidies, seem very remote from rural women's daily battles with gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS, caring for orphans and vulnerable children, and running female-headed households. Women have been part of the election process, choosing leaders to improve their lives, therefore they have the right to benefit from and to be listened to in the trade discussions. But the current process is excluding them.

The impact of EPAs on the livelihood of the poor, especially rural women who form the backbone of subsistence agriculture, is not clear. There are few statistics available on women's involvement in Namibian exports and imports, or on gender roles in the agricultural sector, cattle ownership or women's local trade activities.

However, rural women whom we interviewed in Okakarara as part of this study expressed fears about the new agreements. Women stated that poverty would increase, as their income source, which is the sale of cattle, will be reduced. Without income they cannot afford to take care of their families. Women are already disproportionately affected by poverty; unfair trade policies can make them even more food insecure and vulnerable.

Gender inequalities in households, enterprises and markets mediate responses to trade liberalisation. Contextual analysis is critical because there is a greater demand for flexible, female labour in many contexts (quality/quantity issues). Women may face greater constraints than men in shifting to 'tradables'. Production for the market can undermine household food security and gender inequalities may be used to increase trade competitiveness through lower wages.

There are various challenges in understanding trade-livelihood linkages and it is difficult to isolate the effects of trade policy. Trade analysis and contextualised livelihoods analysis give partial views of linkages and both can be gender blind. Therefore value chain analysis can help illustrate outcomes for women's livelihoods.

However, simple field visits reveal where women are located in the economy and the degree to which their production activities are constrained by access to and control over resources. The Vision 2030 document (2004) states, "There are strong indications of inequality in relationships between women and men in terms of conditioning and positioning". Figures highlight that women are underrepresented in male

dominated professions, where their participation in the labour force is 49% compared to men (60%). Equally, female-headed households are worse off than male headed and women juggle many different burdens at the same time. The question is whether EPAs will remove such burdens or aggravate them?

### Women in agriculture

Women account for 59% of all those engaged in skilled and subsistence agricultural work, according to the 1991 census. This work employs over 70% of rural women classified as employed. While the 1991 census takes account of subsistence agriculture for the first time, it does not capture the full involvement of women in the work force as it overlooks the participation of many "homemakers" (22.4% of the women who are classified as not economically active) in agriculture and other productive activities.

A comparison of the employment status of the economically active population in rural areas shows that many more women than men are own account or unpaid family workers (FAO, 1995).

Since women are primarily smallholders engaged in subsistence agriculture, few are represented in commercially oriented farmers' associations such as the Namibia Agricultural Union (NAU). Women comprise 30 to 60% of the affiliate associations of the Namibia National Farmers Union (NNFU), established in 1992 for communal farmers whose activities, however, focus mainly on marketing and surplus production rather than on improved food production and food processing for women farmers.

The majority of black farmers reside in communal areas in which traditional authorities grant usufruct rights to households for crop production, grazing and access to common pasturage. Rural women gain indirect access through men as wives, daughters and sisters. The security of their tenure is jeopardised by discriminatory marriage customs and inheritance systems.

On average, female-headed households own fewer livestock and are more likely to own no cattle at all, and thus have less access to the benefits of livestock: food, income from the sale of animals, meat and by-products, dung for fertilizer, draught power, and social and cultural status.

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<sup>4</sup> Note that this section has been hampered by the fact that gender-disaggregated data on the role of women in the agricultural sector, and specifically the beef industry, are either non-existent or outdated.



Historically, agricultural extension and services have served the interests and needs of commercial farmers. Although steps have been taken to reorient support towards subsistence farmers, few programmes as yet take account of the activities and priorities of women farmers. There are far fewer women extensionists than men, and women comprise a smaller percentage of the enrolment of agricultural colleges.

Efforts to promote gender awareness and sensitivity among government planners and policymakers include an initiative to train staff in key ministries, including MAWRD and the National Planning Commission (NPC) in gender-sensitive planning. The NPC's Central Statistics Office has devised a strategy to generate, analyse, present and disseminate gender-specific statistics.

The Gender Research Unit at the University of Namibia Research Centre promotes ongoing research and policy discussions on gender issues. An initiative to integrate women into agricultural development programmes includes the development of gender-sensitive data collection and training extension staff in socio-economic and gender analysis.

### Case study: the beef sector

The beef industry plays an important role in the Namibian economy. The meat industry employs around 70% of the country's population and earns a staggering 11.5% of the GDP and 25% of Namibia's foreign exchange. Thus Namibia compares well with beef producing countries like Australia, New Zealand and Argentina (Roger Paskin, pers. comm., Meat Board of Namibia).

It is estimated that communal farmers hold 64% of the national cattle herd (WFP, 2003), implying that they have a key role to play in maintaining the export trade for livestock. Almost a third of all the meat exported comes from the communal farming areas.

**Table 1. Meat production and export statistics**

Item	Value/Statistic
Total cattle population	2.5 million
Total sheep and goats	4.2 million
Total livestock/meat production (tonnes)	85,249
Value of total production (N\$)	1,206,758,987
Total livestock/meat exports (tonnes)	70,412
Value of exports (N\$)	990,818,478
Value of exports (US\$)	93,473,441
% of production exported	82.6%

Sources: Meat Board of Namibia, Namibian Directorate of Veterinary Services and Central Statistics Office

The good health of the meat/beef industry is attributed to the following:

- The extensive farming system: a large part of Namibia is covered with grasslands suited for natural grazing
- Low disease incidence, with internationally recognised foot and mouth disease free zones and favourable BSE status
- Good infrastructure in terms of transport, communications and marketing
- A well-organised agricultural sector
- Reasonable labour costs

(Source: Roger Paskin; FAN)

Namibia's small population cannot absorb all the meat produced within the country, and therefore Namibian livestock producers are geared to producing for export. Currently, Namibia enjoys a beef export quota of 13,000 tonnes under a preferential trade agreement, which ends in 2007. The EU market accounts for 40% of Namibia's beef products exports.

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The effect of exporting meat to the lucrative EU markets over a period of 10 years has been positive for the beef industry, for instance stimulating new investments such as in the Oshakati abattoir, the Okapuka Tannery (N\$33 million, creating 84 jobs), MeatCo Feedlot (4.1 million and 18 jobs), New Tannery (4.5 million and 43 jobs) (Meat Board of Namibia Annual Report 1989-2001). The outcome of this trade has led to the effective structural transformation of the Namibia beef sector from one specialising in live export to a more mature industry that slaughters more animals locally and focuses strongly on sophisticated export markets (Farm Assured Namibia Meat Scheme, 2002)

Liberalising the beef industry has implications for the meat export business. Namibia has to comply with the complex requirements of sanitary and phytosanitary requirements (SPS) and other factors in the ever-changing European market. The trend of events is positive in the Namibian case as seen from the earlier findings.

## **Okakarara: the role of women and men in a cattle rearing community**

There is no doubt that the EPAs will benefit the Namibian beef industry as a whole, but it is a different scenario for rural women. Although livestock rearing constitutes an important economic activity for many rural households, beef production continues to be a male dominated sector in Namibia when it comes to ownership, negotiation of prices and selling to intermediaries such as MeatCo. The role of women is restricted to herding and rearing and mostly they do not own herds. Therefore, they are more prominent in small livestock farming, informal marketing, income generating projects and local production of goods and services. The potential for rural women's empowerment in these areas would therefore serve as a stepping-stone towards women's economic empowerment in relation to the beef trade.

A number of factors justify the need for gender mainstreaming in trade arrangements and rural development planning. In this study we consulted with women and men in one of the livestock producing areas, the Otjozondjupa Region in Okakarara. In this study we compared the role of women and men (Table

2) in the livestock sector and explored their fears and expectations.

The many cultural values linked to cattle mean that many households are reluctant to sell their cattle. Access to and control over resources such as land and other productive assets tend to be in the male domain and this still tends to influence decision-making processes when it comes to the sale of livestock and use of the income earned. However, female-headed households own cattle in their own right and can sell them at local markets.

In our study we found that women are responsible for the overall maintenance of family welfare in terms of education, health, food, school support etc. If the arrival of cheap EU beef products reduces income or suppresses the growth of the cattle industry, then women and their households will be driven further into unemployment and poverty unless mitigation strategies are put in place to minimise the potential impacts of EPAs. This point is clearly illustrated by the outcome of focus group discussions and confirmed by studies undertaken by Eurostep: "The promotion of trade liberalization will lead to significant job losses in ACP countries, particularly in agriculture sectors where people, predominantly women, are already living on low incomes" (Special edition-June 2004, Stop EPA, website: <http://www.eurostep.org/pubs/tradestudy.pdf>).

Our next step was to understand how women and men spend the income they obtain from selling cattle. Our aim was to find out which priority expenditure items may be adversely affected once prices or productive activities decline. Key expenditure areas are vaccines, school fees, water supplies and basic survival (Table 3).

Despite the fact that the beef industry plays an important role in Namibia's economy by contributing 11.5% to GDP, the role of women in this very lucrative cattle trade remains largely invisible. They are largely engaged in traditional domestic activities; lack of natural assets, social barriers and restrictions caused by institutions and processes do not allow them full participation and ownership in this traditionally male-dominated sphere.

Although women may not directly and significantly supply and benefit from the EU market, through their labour they contribute to the intermediary local market, which in turn fattens and exports these cattle. But the increased demand for Namibian beef through the EPAs could increase rural women's already heavy



**Table 2. Roles of women and men in livestock production**

<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Milking cows and making cattle fat	Livestock ownership
Taking the cattle out of the kraal	Vaccinating against Anthrax and Brucellosis, worms and ticks
Assisting with branding	Feeding livestock
Selling cattle at auctions, negotiating prices	Trying to produce quality products and livestock to generate high profit
Injecting cattle, and treating them when they are sick	Dehorn, castrate, putting brand marks and earmarks
Feeding them and taking them to the water points	Gardening
Take them to grazing places for days or months	
Manage the livestock without husband	
Can buy cattle and own them - sometimes	
Have their own brand mark	
Income generating activities such as gardening and sewing	
Taking care of domestic responsibilities	

**Table 3. Priority areas of expenditure (in descending order of priority)**

<b>Women</b>	<b>Men</b>
Vaccines for cattle/small livestock	School fees
School fees	Water bills
Food	Livelihood-day to day
Buying water	Feeding and vaccination for livestock
Clothes	Labourers
Diesel	Deaths of families/burials
Doctors/medicine	Stock theft and trips undertaken to auctions
Shoes	Fuelling
	Repairing of kraals

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workloads as they herd and rear the cattle supplied to the local market. If their capacity is not built in terms of livestock ownership, management and marketing they will remain marginalised and EPAs may worsen rather than improve their livelihoods, especially if they aren't able to share in the benefits and revenue accrued through the beef trade.

We held group discussions with the women's group, focusing on the following two areas:

1. What will increase EU imports to Namibia mean for local farmers?

- It will bring poverty because there will be no selling of our own, no paying of school fees, hunger, forced to sell cattle at lesser prices, "a lot of meat is here it will be either take it or leave it".
- Overgrazing: the country already faces a situation where the carrying capacity is high so there will be a problem with range management and livestock management.
- Economy will fall because we are not selling, we are only buying, no fresh meat, prices will fall, demand will be of lower impact.

2. What key conditions need to be met if they as producers are to increase their production so that Namibia can compete at regional and international levels?

- Women must be given the right to determine and haggle over prices.
- The farmers' union in Okakarara must have its capacity built so that it can assist farmers and act as their voice. Farmers feel cheated by the intermediate institutions to which they sell their cattle.
- Government needs to facilitate market access through transport to auction places as well as bringing water points closer to homesteads.
- Opportunities for income generation and safety nets need to be increased.

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# 7. Conclusions and recommendations

Trade liberalisation is said to enhance the free movement of goods, increase specialisation according to a country's comparative advantage, lead to a more efficient allocation of resources, boost outputs and incomes and benefit consumers. However, in order for this potential to be fully realised, trade policies need to take into account the underlying cultural and social conditions that might prevent some members of society, particularly women, from enjoying the benefits trade has to offer. When trade policy is crafted to maximise economic opportunities for both poor men and women, trade will translate into real increases in living standards and, ultimately sustainable poverty reduction (Gender & Development, INBRIEF Issue 17, January 2006. IDS).

This study, despite its limited scope, has demonstrated that the current EPA discussions mainly focus on macro level issues without considering their implications at the micro level. This is partly due to the absence of civil society organisations in the negotiation process and also the lack of capacity within the country to monitor the application and impact of the EPA. One of the key strategies through which the negative impact of EPAs on women's livelihoods can be minimised or eradicated altogether will be through capacity building and also strengthening the other economic sectors in which women are involved. The study has also started to demonstrate that increase in trade does not in itself alleviate poverty.

The following strategic interventions will be necessary to ensure that the EPAs can alleviate poverty alleviation and help improve women's livelihoods:

## A comprehensive rural development strategy

In order to address the needs of rural women and other vulnerable groups, a comprehensive rural development strategy is required with the following aims:

- To increase rural employment through small-scale enterprises,
- To improve small stock management and improve the participation of women in regional trade of beef as well as goods and services
- To improve safety nets for vulnerable groups and invest in human resources

- To strengthen processes of community based needs assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Equally, in order to reveal the magnitude of problems faced by female-headed households in rural settings, the rural development strategy should be based on analysis of problems from a gender perspective. This means using gender analysis techniques in data collection and mainstreaming gender concerns into project planning. Discriminatory laws must be repealed/amended to ensure that women have equal access to credit and rights to land. For this, greater support should be given to the Women and Law Reform Committee.

Other sections of the economy, e.g. crafts, wildlife management, tourism, aquaculture etc. hold promise for women's economic empowerment and these should be developed. Supporting women's empowerment programmes in diversifying their sources of income could also hold some promise.

## Mainstreaming gender concerns

The Ministry of Gender Equality and Child Welfare, as well as active civil society organisations, should be informed of and sensitised to the current EPA negotiation process and become part of the negotiation team to ensure that empowerment of women and gender equality becomes a reality. The technical barriers to trade are gender specific because both women and men play critical roles in subsistence agriculture and both will need support if household food security is to be maintained at acceptable levels. Sustainable development also implies that women are given equal opportunities and access to and control over resources, existing services and benefits.

Gender concerns also need to be an integral part of the Country Strategic Programme as well as of the Director General's objectives of gender equality in development. The Department of Women's Affairs must be strengthened and have representation in the Cabinet.

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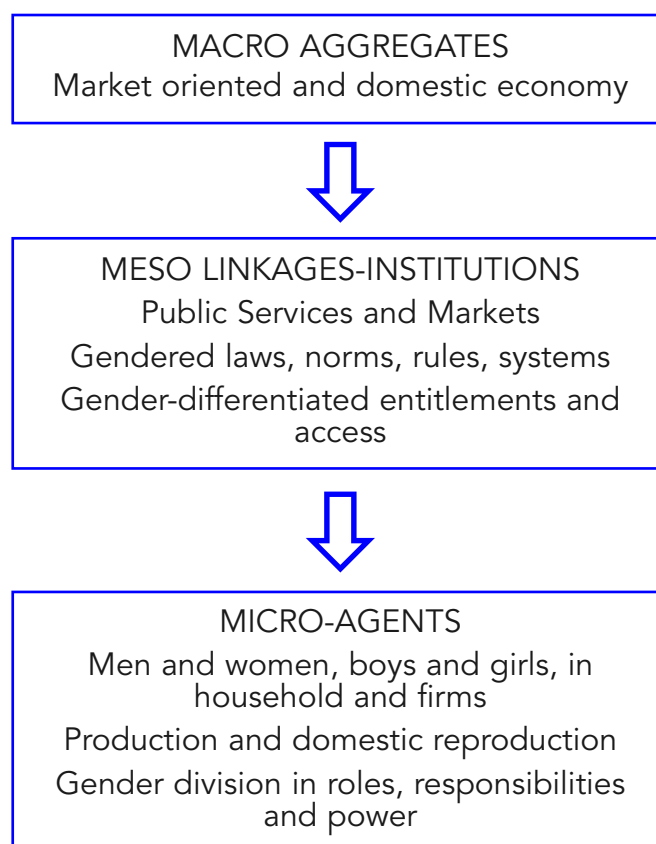
## Collecting gender-disaggregated statistics

Women's productive work in agriculture and other "informal spheres" should be recognised in national statistics and policies. Research should be carried out on the impact of macro-economic and sectoral policies on women, power-relations and processes at the household level, informal coping strategies of rural women, and the role of women in natural resource use and management. Skills in strategic planning are needed to ensure that rural institutions clearly target and aim to serve rural women.

## Strengthening civil society capacity, especially women's voices

Deliberate efforts must be made to engage civil society organisations supporting community-based enterprises in the EPA discussions and strategic planning forums such as the National Trade Forum. The negotiation process will be more productive if the design stage can take into consideration issues of representation and linking macro level discussions with micro level realities and impacts.

## The Economy as a Gendered Structure



Source: Kanji, 2005

Non-state actors (NSAs) need to be trained in gender analysis approaches/tools so they can at least provide input into discussions at country levels. NSAs should consult with each other and be represented at various levels of discussions. NGOs and community-based organisations should be lobbied to include more women in management and decision-making bodies. Associations and pressure groups for rural women should be promoted.

There are indications that the Commission and EU Member States are ready to support capacity and institutional building; it is up to Namibia to decide how it wants to approach the negotiations for the benefit of the country.

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## Supporting women as farmers

Agricultural services should be further decentralised to reach the needy, focus on simple low cost interventions, develop an appropriate technology base for women's agricultural and domestic tasks, target veterinary services to women, and involve women in research on improved crop varieties.

Extension workers should receive training in participatory and gender-aware development approaches and undertake agricultural needs assessments of women farmers. The number of women extension workers should be increased. For this, working conditions must be conducive for women and agricultural colleges should implement affirmative action enrolment policies. Credit unions, NGOs and MAWRD should develop savings and loan schemes appropriate to the needs of rural women.

EPAs have the potential of further aggravating the already worsening situation of women, unless the country embarks on very country specific interventions both at policy and at institutional levels aimed at improving the situation of women through ownership of assets such as land and livestock. And in addition, enforcing inheritance rights and restructuring institutions to allow women to access credit will all lead to their empowerment and ownership of their goods and services.

## Reducing income losses

To reduce lost income from reduced import tariffs, the SADC-EPA countries should agree on a common external tariff towards the EU. This would help in tackling smuggling, trade diversion and economic polarization. This would also promote intra-regional trade and regional integration in Southern Africa. Prior to formal trade arrangements, gaps in productive resources and infrastructure and alternative sources of income should be put in place, including capacity building of farmers and their unions. In other words, adjustment problems and technical and financial assistance will be required.

## Creating a level playing-field

For the EPAs to be seen as economically advantageous to all the participating parties, developed countries should:

- substantially reduce, as soon as possible, the agricultural support in the developed world
- phase out, as soon as possible, agricultural subsidies in the developed world that distort production and trade and lead to dumping
- eliminate all types of export subsidies
- introduce a development package on agriculture to enable developing countries to support and protect their small farmers and key food crops.

International donors such as the IMF, World Bank and the regional development banks need to revise their rules and policies for financial assistance to developing countries. For instance, aid coming from these institutions should not be conditional on LDCs reducing or eliminating farm subsidies.

## Helping the business sector

Businesses will need help in restructuring to respond to the challenges of free trade with the EU. This could mean assistance with re-tooling and restructuring production to serve markets in which duty free EU exports are not a threat. Assistance in finding new markets or in diversifying their product range, concessional financing, technical assistance and trade development support should be extended to the affected companies.

Cheap imports from the EU in terms of goods and services may meet some of women's basic needs, but this may be to the detriment of local businesses and infant industries where women are the key players, especially in the informal sector. Unless the income levels of women are improved they will not be able to access imported goods and services.

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## 9. Annex 1: Progress towards Millennium Development Goals in Namibia [Namibia Millennium Development Goals Country Status Report 2004]

Goal	1992	2003	2006 target	Progress towards targets
<b>1. Eradicate poverty and hunger</b>				
Proportion of households living in relative poverty	38%	-	28%	Lack of data
Proportion of households living in extreme poverty				
<b>2. Achieve universal primary education</b>				
Net primary enrolment	89%	92%	95%	good
Survival rate for grade 5	75%	94%	95%	good
Literacy rate, 15-24 years	89%	89%	94%	slow
<b>3. Promote gender equality and empower women</b>				
Primary education (girls per 100 boys)	102	100	100	good
Secondary education (girls per 100 boys)	124	113	100	good
Tertiary education (girls per 100 boys)	162	111	100	slow
Proportion of seats held by women in National Assembly	9%	19%	30	slow
<b>4. Reduce child mortality</b>				
Infant mortality (per 1000 live births)	67	52	36	slow
Under five mortality rate (per 1000 live births)	87	71	54	slow
Proportion of one year old children immunized against measles	63%	72%	80%	good
Underweight amongst children under five	26%	24%	17%	slow
<b>5. Improve mental health</b>				
Proportion of births attended by trained health personnel	68%	75%	88%	good
Contraceptive prevalence rate	21%	37%	50%	good
<b>6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b>				
HIV prevalence amongst 13-19 old women	6%	11%	9%	worsening
HIV/prevalence amongst 20-24 old women	11%	22%	15%	worsening
TB treatment success rate	58%	69%	75%	good
<b>7. Ensure environmental sustainability</b>				
Proportion of rural households with access to safe drinking water	45%	80%	80%	good
Proportion of rural households with access to basic sanitation	15%	21%	50%	slow
Freehold land	5%	6.1%	8.5%	slow
Registered conservancies	0%	4.9%	10.9%	slow
<b>8. Develop a global partnership for development</b>				
Per capita overseas development assistance to Namibia (in US\$)	130	60	90	worsening