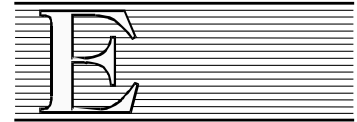




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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA  
African Centre for Gender and Development**

*Meeting of the Committee on Women and Development*  
*Meeting of Experts*  
9-11 October, 2002  
Johannesburg, South Africa

**The African Gender and Development Index  
and  
The African Women's Report 2002/2003**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

AWMP	African Women Ministers and Parliamentarians
CCA	Common Country Assessment,
CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
GAD	Gender and Development Approach
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEI	Gender Equality Index
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GDI	Gender-related Development Index
GRF	Gender Roles Framework
GSI	The Gender Status Index
HDI	Human Development Index
HDR	Human Development Report
IDS	Institute of Development Studies of Sussex University
POA	Programme of Action
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
SIGE	Standardised Index of Gender Equality
SRF	Social Relations Framework
WEM	Women's Empowerment Matrix
WID	Women in Development

## 1 OVERVIEW

In the wake of Beijing+ 5, the international community including national governments and civil society organizations are weighing the effectiveness and sustainable impact of women's global and regional forums against their costs and frequency. Twenty-five years after Mexico and five years after Beijing, it is obvious that the overall goal of the global process for "Development, Gender Equality and Peace" has not yet been achieved. Poverty is on the rise and so is the feminisation of poverty. Women constitute 70% of the world's poor, especially in Africa. Maternal mortality rate figures are increasing (80 to 100 deaths for 1000 births) in Africa due to poor access to proper health care, poor life conditions and the burden of a heavy workload. Domestic and gender-based violence against women is also on the rise especially in those countries under conflict situations. Gender disparities in basic rights, resources and economic opportunities are pervasive around the world – in spite of recent gains.

Over the years, it has become apparent that one of the reasons behind women's continued marginalisation is the fact that gender concerns have not been fully and/or systematically incorporated into national policy and programme formulation processes, or in their implementation. In addition, women's contributions are not included in national accounting systems. As a result, women tend to be excluded from the mainstream.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), together with other Regional Commissions, has been mandated by the UN General Assembly to organize in collaboration with Member States, periodic evaluations of the implementation of the Global and Regional Platforms for Action on the advancement of women and to report on the progress made.

Africa, under the auspices of ECA, has sought to integrate the global mechanisms of sensitisation, monitoring and evaluation by organizing periodic regional conferences on women (Nouakchott-1977, Lusaka-1979, Arusha-1984, Abuja-1989, Dakar-1994 and Addis-Ababa-1999). These regional and international meetings have enabled women systematically to review national policies and strategies in line with the respective objectives of the Platforms for Action. At these forums, it has been possible to introduce and undertake a gender analysis of issues related to poverty, agriculture, peace building, trade, transport, industrialization, globalisation, etc.

One immediate shortcoming of these global and regional processes is that they suffer from an inherent gender bias as they are considered “women’s” events. The other is that conferences alone cannot monitor what is happening on the ground. Effective monitoring calls for close collaboration with both national governments and NGOs who, because of proximity, are in a better position to monitor and evaluate progress made in the implementation of regional and global platforms for action. In addition, there is a need to document the different experiences occurring on the continent and subsequently to disseminate best practices on the advancement of women in Africa.

To facilitate a more effective monitoring mechanism, ECA’s African Centre for Gender and Development (ACGD) is developing an African Gender and Development Index (AGDI) which will be published in the African Women’s Report, 2002/3. The Report is an important tool for informing regional and global processes on the situation and the status of women in Africa.

## **2. WHY THE NEED FOR AN AFRICAN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT INDEX:**

A number of indices have been developed to assess the situation of women in all sectors of development and decision-making. Perhaps the most well known are the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) developed by UNDP in 1995, prior to the World Conference on women. These measures are now commonly used in the UNDP Human Development Report. However, both the GDI and the GEM cover only what is measurable and therefore do not cover other dimensions that are important for gender equality, such as participation in community life, consumption of resources within the family and others. The GDI is strongly correlated with the GDP and thus measures general welfare rather than gender (in) equality in itself. Dijkstra and Hanmer (2000) computed a scatter plot of GDI against the natural log of real GDP (per capita) for 137 developing countries. Their findings demonstrate that GDI and GDP are closely correlated. This means that the level of gender equity is substantially ‘explained’ by the income level of a country and **yet gender equity is more than income.**

There are also a wide variety of other indicators that have been developed by different institutions. However, their coverage of gender specific issues is still somewhat limited. For example the GEM focuses on three variables that reflect women’s participation in society: political decision-making, access to professional opportunities and earning power. The GEM

looks at women's representation in parliaments, women's share of positions classified as managerial and professional, and women's participation in the active labor force and their share of national income. In short, it attempts to capture women's political, economic and social participation. But there is a reliability problem of political power as measured by women's share of parliamentary seats. Parliaments are not always the locus of power in a country, and the use of a quota system, as in the former socialist countries, can hide underlying power mechanisms (Wieringa 1977). Women's power base did not decrease dramatically for instance when, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, women's share in parliamentary seats decreased dramatically in various former socialist countries. Rather the number of seats women previously occupied masked the extent of women's subordination.

Apart from the reliability of particularly the income indicator, the major problem of the GEM lies in its validity as a measure of empowerment. The crucial question is on what understanding of power is the GEM built? How is empowerment conceptualized? The GEM is not concerned with issues related to the body and sexuality, nor to religious, cultural or legal issues. Also left out are issues of ethics, women's rights and care. The lack of consideration of the human rights dimension is striking, as other UN bodies, such as UNIFEM, do pay attention to this issue. The GEM is not concerned with the violation of women's rights and does not measure, for instance, whether CEDAW is ratified or adhered to. This is covered in the matrix boxes under the headings of legal combined with international and national. The 1995 Human Development Report does list the countries that have ratified the CEDAW, but the GEM itself does not include it (UNDP 1995:43).

The African Women's Report will have an introduction discussing other indicators currently being used and their weaknesses. However, it is important to note that the GDI and the GEM are valuable policy instruments, particularly because they allow a global comparison.

The UNIFEM Biennial Report of the Progress of the World's Women points out to the complexities of measuring gender equality and women's empowerment due to the tangible and intangible dimensions that have to be addressed in these areas. The task is even more difficult in Africa where statistics and gender-disaggregated data are limited.

Six years after the Beijing World Conference on women, the challenge is to develop an index that measures the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms of Action and that incorporates issues such as participation, empowerment, equality and equity. This calls for

the definition of the relevant variables that will capture the experiences and achievements in the Africa Region.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE AGDI:**

The AGDI is expected to achieve a number of objectives.

- Firstly, it is hoped that it will provide African policy makers, gender planners and politicians with an appropriate tool to measure the extent of gender inequality in their countries, as well as the effects of their gender policies in the reduction of women's subordination.
- Secondly, most African countries have ratified the CEDAW and other international documents, such as the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994) and the Platform for Action drawn up after the 1995 Fourth Women's World Conference in Beijing. The AGDI will help in monitoring the progress made in this respect.
- Thirdly, the AGDI will not only facilitate the democratisation of statistics, but will also provide gender planners and NGOs with a monitoring tool that is effective and easy to use. In this way the AGDI will stimulate the process of community participation and enhance political awareness of gender concerns, which is vital to processes of women's empowerment.

The development of the AGDI will be incremental, building on and also bringing new variables to work that have been implemented elsewhere.

### **4. THE AFRICAN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT INDEX (AGDI)**

#### **4.1 Description of the AGDI**

As earlier indicated, the development of the AGDI arises from the apparent inadequacies of the conventional indices to capture and comprehensively measure the realities of women in Africa. The African Gender and Development Index that is being proposed consists of two parts:

i) ***The Gender Status Index (GSI):***

This is a measure of relative gender equality that captures those issues related to women's empowerment that can be measured quantitatively. It is divided in three

blocks of indicators: social power, economic power and political power, which are supposedly readily available or easy to calculate on an annual basis.

- “Social power” includes indicators on education and health;
- “Economic power” includes indicators on income, labour force, time use and access to resources; and
- “Political power” includes indicators on senior or higher political and management positions.

Each block is divided into various variables that are again subdivided into a number of indicators. Only flow indicators will be used, so as to enable policy makers and activists to see direct results of particular interventions. The indicators will only deal with gender issues i.e. only those that relate to the relations between women and men. For that reason, for instance, maternal mortality is not included, as that only applies to women.

The various indicators receive equal weight within their variable, and this same principle is upheld for the variables within each block. The three blocks receive an equal weight in computing the AGDI. The proposal is to use simple arithmetic averages of women compared to men, while ignoring population-weighted harmonic means as a basis of computation. In this way the AGDI has been kept as simple as possible, as one of the aims is to democratise statistics, so NGO’s can use it as well. In countries where there is a serious demographic problem and where the balance between women and men is heavily distorted it may be considered to adapt the AGDI to weigh the averages between women and men. For the 11 countries in which AGDI will be tested, the intention is not to use weighed averages.

**ii) *The African Women’s Progress Scoreboard:***

This will complement the GSI. The Scoreboard will capture the more qualitative elements of women’s empowerment, as contained in the boxes under legal, ideological and religious issues of the WEM. Together, the GSI and the Scoreboard capture a large part of the WEM. The Scoreboard is designed in such a way that the most pressing issues pertaining to African women’s empowerment are included. A country first computes the maximum nationally possible score and then assigns points to the various boxes indicated. The total score of the scoreboard is the percentage of points scored against the maximum nationally possible score.

The **Women's Empowerment Matrix (WEM)**'s elements are as follows:

	Physical	Sociocultural	Religious	Political	Legal	Economic
Personal						
Household						
Community						
State						
Region						
Global						

The scoreboard is an improvement of WEM and will be as follows:

### **African Women's Progress Scoreboard**

	Law	Policy commitment	Budget	Training	Institutional Mechanisms	Information
<b>CEDAW</b>						
<b>Customary/dual law system</b>						
<b>Harmful traditional Practices</b>						
<b>Family violence</b>						
<b>Land rights (control)</b>						
<b>ILO 100 (Ratification and labour code)</b>						
<b>Free contraception</b>						
<b>HIV prevention Abuja Agreement (Sexual health education)</b>						
<b>Involvement of women in Conflict prevention</b>						

Based on points

+ yes

- no

n/a ; not applicable

Percentage in relation to maximum (nationally possible) score

The scorecard is based on a simple measurement system. First the maximum possible score for any country is computed. As not all indicators will be relevant to all countries the total score may differ. Then the percentage of plusses in relation to that total score is computed. The advantage of the scorecard is that it immediately measures successes. Another advantage is that it is based on simple arithmetic.

The AGDI will be published in the ECA Africa Women's Report of 2002/2003. The AWR is a strategic information and communication tool for

- The Gender analysis of national, sub-regional and regional policy frameworks; and

- Monitoring and Advocacy on the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platforms for Action for follow up and recording of progress, best practices and new priorities on the continent.

## **4.2 Methodology of the development of the AGDI and production of the AWR**

The methodology being used in the whole project is crafted in a manner that ensures production of realistic and relevant indicators as well as the production of a credible AWR. The process is also transparent and consultative so that member states are part of the process and own the AGDI rather than see it as a punitive tool for non-performance. Selected institutions in eleven pilot countries will be responsible for supervising the trials in the different countries and inputting the African case studies into the African Women's Report. The process of the development of the AGDI as well as the production of the African Women's Report is as follows:

### **i. Review of gender indices which will include collection and analysis of existing indices to be undertaken by ACGD**

A desk study has been undertaken and a number of existing gender indices were reviewed to identify gaps as well as strengths. The study was used to assist in the development of the framework of the gender index.

### **ii. Definition of the theoretical framework of the gender index**

The theoretical framework has been defined and used to develop the draft AGDI.

### **iii. Definition of the variables of the gender index by a working group of experts.**

A working group comprising of statisticians, economists, sociologists and gender and development experts was convened to work on the framework of the AGDI as well as review the indicators that were identified as part of the AGDI. The group also reviewed the African Women's Progress Scoreboard.

### **iv. Finalisation of the AGDI by ACGD**

Currently work is underway to finalise the AGDI based on the recommendations of the working group.

### **v. Validation of the AGDI**

The final AGDI will be presented to an Advisory group made up of members of the UN interagency group and resource persons. The group also includes experts from each of the eleven pilot countries. The Advisory group will Review the draft African Gender and Development Index and validate it. The advisory group will also review the AWR upon its completion.

vi. **Field trials in 11 countries**

Field trials will be undertaken in the five regions of Africa in the following 11 countries: East Africa (Uganda, Tanzania); Central Africa (Cameroon, Gabon); North Africa (Egypt, Tunisia); West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana); and Southern Africa (Mozambique and South Africa).

The objectives of the trials are:

- To put to test both the GSI and the Scoreboard.
- To collect the data for the Gender Status Index
- To collect the elements of the Women's Progress Scoreboard
- To gather case studies that substantiates both the GSI and the Scoreboard.
- To assemble good practices that can be used to show progress in addressing the gender inequality
- To prompt a process of national collection and documentation of gender-disaggregated data that can be used for monitoring and evaluating programmes in terms of gender

vii. **Production of the AWR**

Based on the information from the field, the draft AWR will be produced and this will be validated by the group of advisors.

**5. CONCLUSION**

The 2002/2003 AWR will provide information of eleven countries as a process to test and validate the usability of the AGDI before its use at a regional level. The next AWR's report 2004/2005 will report on all the fifty-six member states in Africa. ECA will use the period of the dissemination of the 2002/2003 AWR to assist and prepare the other countries to start collecting relevant data. This will also be the period to receive feedback on the 2002/2003 AWR.

The AGDI is an important challenge to all member states to make certain that programmes being implemented to narrow the gender equality gaps are effective. It is a major challenge to member states to seriously look at where they are through the African Women's Progress Scoreboard and take measures to address any imbalances that exist.

The AGDI takes Africa to the next World Women's Conference and beyond. It is one of the important instruments for Africa to show the world its serious intention to address gender inequalities.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE MEETING**

The CWD to consider the following:

- The use of the AGDI by member states as a tool to measure the status of gender equality in Africa and for countries to measure their progress on the situation of women.
- The adoption of AGDI by member states to be used within their Economic Development Plans.
- The adoption of AGDI to be used within NEPAD as a measure of the status of gender equality and women's progress.