

Main findings

Using the four blocks as the framework for analysis, the AGDI trial outcomes present important issues for consideration by governments and other stakeholders. This summary starts with a review of the women's rights block findings since it encapsulates where African countries stand with regard to their commitments to women's rights. It then proceeds into the results of the analysis pertaining to the social, economic and political blocks.

The women's rights block

The women's rights block investigates compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Optional Protocol to CEDAW (OP-CEDAW), and the Optional Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the African Women's Protocol). The analysis of the women's rights block shows that all 12 countries have ratified CEDAW, but that of these, three (Egypt, Ethiopia and Tunisia) have maintained reservations to date. Particularly in the cases of Egypt and Tunisia, these reservations relate to "CEDAW core areas": Articles 2 and 16, which deal with enforcement of non-discrimination and equality in marriage and family life. While other countries have integrated non-discriminatory clauses into their constitutions and other legislative frameworks and proceeded with reforms in marriage, family and property relations, their content, judicial interpretation and operation tend to be hampered by the continued operation of customary law and general lack of capacity of enforcement agencies. Progressive rulings emerging from the constitutional courts of some countries, such as Benin, South Africa and Uganda are however demonstrating that it is possible to protect women from discrimination through informed and responsive interpretation of the law.

Compared to the Convention, the level of accession to the OP-CEDAW tends to be lower. Of the 12 countries, five (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Tunisia) have ratified it; three countries (Benin, Ghana and Madagascar) have signed it, while the remaining four: Egypt, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda, have not taken any action. The additional observations cited in relation to the OP-CEDAW relate to the general lack of awareness of its contents. Consequently, prospects of its utilisation as a monitoring mechanism by civil society, even among ratifying countries, remain remote.

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With respect to the African Women’s Protocol, the results show that to date, six countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique, South Africa and United Republic of Tanzania), have submitted instruments of ratification, while four (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Madagascar and Uganda) have signed it. The remaining two (Egypt and Tunisia) have yet to initiate moves towards its endorsement. The AWPS also assesses implementation of Article 5 of the Protocol, dealing with Harmful Practices. The findings show persisting challenges with respect to the elimination of practices such as Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). Ingrained negative attitudes and perceptions of society towards gender equality and women’s empowerment, and the absence or inadequacy of human and financial resources in the implementing institutions constitute drawbacks to the full realisation of this treaty.

The social block

The AGDI’s social block investigates performance with respect to Violence Against Women (VAW), education and health.

The component on *violence against women* investigates the extent to which countries are addressing the complexities associated with domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, trafficking in women, and in implementing Article 27 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC). The pilot found that indications of political will to combat the various forms of violence is growing, seen by the fact that five countries (Cameroon, Ghana, Mozambique, South Africa and Uganda) have either initiated or completed law reforms that aim to combat and punish domestic violence. Additionally, seven countries (Burkina Faso, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania and Tunisia) have comprehensive rape laws in place. Of these, Madagascar and South Africa include marital rape in their definition of rape. While reforms in sexual harassment tend to be more *ad hoc*, those related to trafficking have been more progressive. To date, five countries (Benin, Cameroon, Egypt, Madagascar and South Africa) have ratified the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children; while Ghana, South Africa and Uganda have enacted laws against human trafficking.

Common constraints to effective elimination of VAW include the inadequacy of existing implementation measures, such as legal awareness campaigns; capacity enhancement programmes for law enforcement personnel (such as the police, prosecutors and judges), and limited financial and human resources to sustain the work of mandated institutions.

The specific indicators reviewed under the *education* component are gross primary, secondary and tertiary enrolment; primary and secondary drop out ratios; ability to read and write among the population aged 15 years and above; and completion of primary school. At primary level, South Africa and Tunisia show higher female enrolment compared to males. Parity in primary enrolment also appears imminent in seven countries (Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda), while for Benin, Burkina Faso and Ethiopia achievement of the MDG 2 target of ensuring that girls and boys will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling by 2015 is likely to take longer.

A mixed picture is created with respect to the attainment of gender equality at secondary and tertiary levels. While no country has attained parity at secondary level, six (Cameroon, Egypt, Madagascar, South Africa, Tunisia and Uganda) show promising signs of doing so. At tertiary level, South Africa and Tunisia have more females than males enrolled, while Cameroon, Egypt and Madagascar show signs of being close to parity. However, the actual gross enrolment figures for both sexes create more of a dismal picture as it shows marked reduction of numbers of both sexes from primary to the higher levels of education. This is the case for the majority of countries identified as almost achieving parity at secondary level (Egypt, Madagascar, South Africa and Tunisia) in addition to those who do not demonstrate it (Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda).

A similar picture is painted for tertiary education. The findings show that South Africa and Tunisia have higher female to male enrolment, while Cameroon, Egypt and Madagascar are close to achieving parity. Again, the overall picture of enrolment must be given sufficient attention, as efforts towards parity (particularly in higher education) have been accompanied by declines in both male and female enrolment rates, but especially males in the majority of instances.

The *health* component of the AGDI covers child health (stunting under 3; underweight under 3; and mortality under 5); HIV/AIDS prevalence; time spent out of work; and progress being made in four ICPD +15 commitments, namely: HIV/AIDS and STI prevention and treatment, maternal mortality and family planning. The assessment of child health indicators generally point to poor nutrition and high mortality rates, especially among boys in many of the pilot countries. Although countries demonstrate high levels of commitments to the stated ICPD +15 indicators through policy design and partnerships with civil society and donor support, HIV/AIDS prevalence rates for women tend to be higher compared to men in all countries. Maternal Mortality Ratios are also high as the vast majority of countries continue to face challenges associated with inaccessibility to emergency obstetric care, unsafe abortions and the shortage of medical personnel. Although indications of falling fertility rates in all the countries are evident, measures to comprehensively

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The economic block

The AGDI’s economic block assesses the extent to which women are meaningful players and beneficiaries in the economic development processes of their respective countries. It measures levels of gender inequalities in economic activity through income levels, time use or employment, access to productive and strategic resources and implementation of ILO Conventions 100 (Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951); 111 (Discrimination in Employment and Occupation, 1958); 183 (Maternity Protection, 1952, as revised), the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work; and the extent to which countries are mainstreaming gender into PRSPs.

The outcomes demonstrate that women’s earnings (across formal and informal sectors) tend to be the value of half of men’s. This is attributable to constraints, such as women’s comparatively limited access to productive factors, including land, technology and credit. In the formal sector (e.g. civil service employment), except in limited cases, women also occupy the lowest paying positions, such as clerical and secretarial. The analysis of a limited number of Time Use Surveys also indicates that, in general, women tend to spend more time on domestic work and less on productive activity compared to men.

Furthermore, while progress has been made in maternity protection, wage discrimination against women is largely persistent, and there has been a general failure on the part of countries to design appropriate policies, with clear targets and institutional mechanisms to pursue equal employment opportunities. Additionally, while policy commitment to addressing feminized poverty through engendering national PRSPs tends to be growing, overall achievements in this area have been hampered by the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation, and inadequate human and financial resource allocation.

The political block

The political block measures levels of gender equality in decision-making within public and private sectors. With respect to the former, four countries (Mozambique, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, and Uganda) have achieved the 30 per cent threshold for women’s participation within the legislature. Women’s generally

limited representation in legislative bodies is usually due to the overall absence of gender-aware policies among political parties. Their low visibility at the local governance level, in addition to within the judiciary, civil service, and as heads of civil society organisations, is uniform across most countries.

The political block also measures governments' commitment to implement UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2001) on Women, Peace and Security, BPfA critical area of concern to establish effective and accessible national machineries and gender mainstreaming processes in all government departments. Highlights of the results of the country assessments show very minimal implementation of Resolution 1325, and demonstrate only token or no commitment on the part of these countries to integrate gender perspectives into conflict prevention, management, and resolution processes.

Although most countries have established national machineries to deal with the BPfA commitments, inadequate financial and human resources, lack of clear focus; uncertainties in co-ordination and limited research have rendered the vast majority of these institutions ineffective. Shortfalls resulting from the existence of weak gender machineries could have been ameliorated through effective gender mainstreaming in all government departments. The results show, however, that most governments are not fully implementing this process, and where they are, that gender desks or focal persons have not been given the full mandate, professional commitment and resources to effectively implement their mainstreaming goals.

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Some cross dimensional synergies

Country assessments demonstrate overwhelming progress in legal and policy development in the social, cultural, economic and political fields, which aim at addressing gender inequality between men and women. Implementation is, however, being hampered by the limited allocation of human and budgetary resources. The African Women's Report demonstrates therefore, that there is a lack of consistency between the GSI and AWPS results, in which it appears that most countries continue to manifest situations of inequality regardless of reforms in place. There is also lack of uniformity in outcomes across the four blocks. Whereas it would be logical for instance to expect that countries with impressive track records in bridging gaps in education (e.g. Madagascar and Tunisia) to have similar achievements in the political and economic spheres, this has not been the case. In addition, despite its impressive overall social block rating under the GSI, South Africa records high maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS prevalence rates as found in the AWPS analysis.

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The AGDI also leads to an increased appreciation of the interdependency of indicators contained in each of the blocks. A key example of this is girls' education and its links to improved child health and declines in early marriage. The AGDI findings also demonstrate that women's economic empowerment would significantly enhance food security at the household level, as well as facilitate reduction of child malnutrition.

Key action points

The issues identified by the field trials present a number of actions to be taken by African governments and other stakeholders. The following are the highlights:

Women's rights

African Governments must

- *Give high priority to the implementation of CEDAW, the BpFA and the African Women's Protocol*, backed by adequate financial and human resources, and appropriate related monitoring and evaluation mechanisms.
- *Provide women with the necessary tools* such as legal aid and accessible courts to enforce their rights in line with the fundamental position of women as rights holders.
- Appreciate that they are accountable to women and the need to demonstrate commitment through the elimination of *de facto* and *de jure* discrimination by means of comprehensive legal reforms and attitudinal change.

The African Union needs to

- *Set high reporting and monitoring standards* of government commitments to ensure that the African Women's Protocol is given high visibility as the reference point for implementation of the gendered aspects of other African initiatives, such as NEPAD.
- Ensure that the African Women's Protocol attains effective recognition at sub regional level and is given place as the reference framework for all gender-mainstreaming initiatives.

UN and regional agencies (e.g. UNECA, AU, UNIFEM) need to work towards

- Improving co-ordination, maximizing efforts and the use of resources, especially within the context of proposed United Nations reforms which aim to harmonize the mandates of agencies which work on advancing women's rights.
- *Identifying and facilitating opportunities for sharing the progressive experiences in best practices* taking place in some countries.
- Providing financial and technical support to countries to *review and reform customary and religious laws* in collaboration with stakeholders such as including traditional and religious leaders.

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Social block

Violence Against Women and Children

African governments and civil society must

- *Address violence* through sustained law reform; capacity enhancement of enforcement agencies; public awareness campaigns (inclusive of strategies to *reverse the culture of silence surrounding violence*, its relegation as a private issue and the impunity with which such crimes are committed).
- *Adopt regional, sub regional and inter-country multilateral and bilateral trafficking protocols*, which aim to strengthen enforcement regimes; secure prosecution of perpetrators; and the protection, rehabilitation and reintegration of victims.

Education

African governments must

- Tackle gender gaps at higher levels of education through further *subsidization of secondary and technical education*, expansion of day care establishments, enhancing boarding facilities, providing relevant night school programmes and other forms of alternative education schemes.
- Address and reverse the current trend of high school drop outs among boys.

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- Run these initiatives in tandem with *female retention* measures, such as safe and sanitary environments for girls; training of more female teachers; and the prevention of violence in schools.
- Instil a sense of confidence in the education system by ensuring that school curricula are relevant to the job market situations of African economies.

Women and Child Health

African Governments, NGOs and Development Partners must

- Address the current high levels of maternal mortality and the gendered impacts of HIV/AIDS, using selected strategies that include *improved equity in access and service delivery*, especially with respect to emergency obstetric care and HIV/AIDS treatment.
- Tackle the impact of the shortage of health services providers including medical staff by strengthening African health systems, especially at rural level, bearing in mind pro-poor strategies and the adoption of alternative forms of training.
- Sustain and scale up successful efforts in high and equitable coverage for *priority interventions* in child health such as the Expanded Programmes of Immunization (EPI); Vitamin A supplementation; and the use of insecticide-treated bed nets (ITNs), especially in deprived areas of African countries.
- Undertake comparable efforts and investments to support the case management of childhood illnesses, family planning services, ante natal, child birth, and post natal care.

Economic block

Governments, NGOs and Development Partners must

- Build consensus around the *recognition of women's contributions to the market economy* through their roles in both market and non-market work.
- Address disproportionate time burdens on women in the domestic sphere through improvements in access to public goods, such as water sources, day care centres, and health facilities, especially in rural situations.
- Take steps towards accelerating poverty reduction, using strategies such as mainstreaming of gender perspectives into PRSPs and other national devel-

opment planning frameworks and processes such as Gender Responsive Budgeting.

- Follow-up and document the monitoring and evaluation of the gender dimensions of commitments in such policies, with a view to taking corrective action along with setting up scorecards in all development sectors for purposes of accountability.
- Address discriminatory barriers which prevent women from accessing productive resources, such as land, labour, technology and credit.

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Political block

African Governments must

- Commit to the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (2004), and the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (2007), which *call for gender balance and equality in governance processes* and include a commitment to affirmative action (CEDAW, Article 4).
- Take steps to reverse situations of gender stereotyping in appointment processes, especially as they relate to positions which are traditionally dominated by men at political party, executive, ministerial, judicial and civil society levels.
- Embark upon continuous capacity building programmes for prospective women candidates and plan towards the creation of a coalition or alliance around a critical mass of able women in politics.
- Invest in public education and sensitization against stereotyping of women’s roles in society.

Cross cutting actions

African Governments must

- Give priority to research and data collection of sex-disaggregated statistics at all levels.
- *Invest in the deployment of time use surveys* in the short term, to facilitate generation of data on how men and women use their time and ensure that development initiatives are informed by these outcomes.

- Provide all institutions, which are directly or indirectly connected with the implementation of women's rights, with the necessary human and financial resource support to implement their respective mandates. They include national machineries for women, law reform commissions, human rights commissions, social welfare agencies, civil society (including the media) and enforcement institutions (police, courts and immigration services).
- *Invest in sustained public awareness programmes* that emphasize the gains to society if women are given the same opportunities as men in the social, economic and political spheres.
- Implement affirmative action measures in these spheres, with a view to accelerating *de facto* and *de jure* equality between men and women.