GENDER AND GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA: a CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR Research AND POLICY ANALYSIS AND MONITORING

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

The 2000 African Women Report intends to focus on the critical issue of gender and governance. This has become a central concern worldwide and in Africa, since good governance is thought to be a prerequisite for sustainable development. The report will assess the situation of women in Africa and make policy recommendations to enhance participation in the future. To this end, the present chapter will define and outline the major conceptual and methodological issues that will undergird the report. Following this, suggestions will be made on the structure and content of the remaining four chapters of the report. It is expected that these chapters will follow closely the issues highlighted in the conceptual chapter. Finally, a list of possible organisations that may be contacted for data will be provided.

14.0 Background

The century that has just ended will be remembered as the one in which entire nations and disadvantaged groups within nations struggled to obtain political, social and economic rights, to throw off the yoke of oppression, to define themselves as ‘human’ and as deserving of all the human rights usually accorded only the privileged members of society. During the last thirty years of the twentieth century serious effort and much resource went to researching, exposing, and finding lasting solutions to an age-old problem: gender inequality. In addition to the vast number of national and international conferences, workshops and seminars that took place, the United Nations organised five world conferences to monitor the status of women, suggest initiatives against a host of intransigent problems, and encourage the implementation of platforms agreed upon by participating nations. In 1979, the United Nations Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women was held. This was a major landmark, even though one United Nations conference had already been held in Mexico in 1975. The 1979 Convention secured a pledge from States to develop policies, the legal framework and other measures to abolish all forms of discrimination against women in every aspect of their lives. It goes beyond the usual practice of using men as the norm, to emphasising "that the distinctive characteristics of women and their vulnerabilities to discrimination merit a specific legal response". Following this, United Nations conferences on women were held in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985), Beijing (1995) and New York (2000). The overall concern
has been to improve women’s status, and find solutions to the problems of inequality and social injustice to which women are subjected.

1.2.1 Increasingly, from Mexico (1975) to New York (2000) emphasis has been on upgrading women’s political participation at all levels of society. The situation is no longer one of merely providing welfare services to ‘help’ women improve their quality of life. The original development focus on women’s basic needs brought with it the perception that women required extensive welfare services and were, in fact a drain on development resources, especially in their capacity as producers of children. Furthermore, it led to the erroneous attitude that empowerment would emerge from merely providing services. But, power sharing does not follow automatically. Boserup and others have also pointed out that rather than being a drain, women are in reality, the unrecognised and poorly compensated contributors to economic, social and cultural development. Following the Nairobi (1985) conference criticisms of development programmes, and the theories on which they were based, escalated. It became increasingly clear that gender gaps in all sectors of society would not close until women participated in decision making and power. Across the globe people began to specifically address the issue of gender imbalance in decision-making. In Africa, several declarations were ratified including the Khartoum (1988), Arusha (1990) and Abuja (1995) declarations all calling for the full participation of women in governance.

1.2.2 Discussions came to a head at the 1995 Beijing conference, where the Platform for Action emphasised that "without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspectives in all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved". Thus, not only did Beijing expand the focus of political participation from the narrow interest in official government bodies to civil, social and economic arenas, but it also made the overall development agenda contingent on the full participation of women. It called for gender segregated studies, laws, initiatives, and leadership training progammes, as well as financial commitment to ensure the necessary transformations take place. By the mid-1990s this focus on increased participation for women had culminated in the concept of governance. According to the UNDP, governance is "the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country’s affairs at all levels". Good governance requires that mechanisms be established to ensure effective and equitable participation of all groups in society and that particular attention be paid to the most marginalised. The issue of good governance therefore speaks directly to the problem of women’s participation, and as Chrittister argues, without women’s voices what any nation has is male dictatorship masquerading as democracy. Democracy, to be discussed shortly, has emerged as the theoretical cornerstone of good governance and development. Five years after Beijing, the world once again took stock of women’s progress in each society. However, at the conference held in New York, in June 2000, the assessment was not encouraging. While many governments, social institutions and civic organisations have accepted the idea of gender balance in decision-making "a gap between de jure and de facto equality has persisted" and "women continue to be under-represented at the legislative, ministerial and sub-ministerial levels, as well as at the highest levels of the corporate sector and other social and economic institutions". Both national and international bodies are implicated in this resistance to change, including the United Nations itself which is one of the major organisations spearheading the call for radical transformations. Data on the proportion of parliament who are female around the world reveal that, on average, increase since Beijing has
been miniscule – from 11.3 percent to 13.4 percent globally. However, there are important variations, with the Nordic countries registering 38.9 percent and the Arab States 3.4 percent. The average for Sub-Saharan Africa is 11.5 percent, and although this is not too different from Europe (excluding the Nordic countries – 13.5 percent) and the Americas (15.3 percent), there is room for improvement. Table I reveals the differences between African nations. Representation at the executive (ministerial and sub-ministerial) level rose from 5.7 percent in 1995 to 11.7 percent in 1999 for the world.

**Table 1 WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT IN AFRICA AS OF 1 MARCH 2000**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTRY AND RANK</th>
<th>TOTAL WOMEN</th>
<th>% WOMEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mozambique</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. South Africa</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>28.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Seychelles</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Uganda</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>17.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Rwanda</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Botswana</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Tanzania</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Angola</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Eritrea</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Namibia</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Senegal</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Zimbabwe</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Congo</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Tunisia</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Cape Verde</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Liberia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.1</td>
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<td>Country</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Lesotho</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Sao Thome, Principe</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Madagascar</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Guinea Bissau</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Central African Republic</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Cameroon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Mauritania</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
42. Gambia  
43. Ethiopia  
44. Niger  
45. Morocco  
46. Egypt  
47. Djibouti  
48. Libya  
TOTAL  

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union, Geneva

1.2.3 Arguments for women’s equal representation in governance have been forcefully made, even though progress is slow. Women should be part of decision-making bodies, first as a matter of social justice, since women comprise at least half of the population in each nation, but also because women’s perspectives and experiences add new dimensions to deliberations. Further, women have the potential to transform politics from a male constructed arena to something different. It is now known that women bring different styles and concerns to political fora. Male perspectives alone leave political deliberations incomplete. Given the perceived urgency of the need to upgrade the political position of women, it is imperative to develop conceptual and methodological frameworks to expose those factors which engender or obstruct the full participation of women in social life. The specific focus on Africa requires that we place the region within its global context in understanding these issues. Africa shares with the rest of humanity numerous institutions and processes which are relevant to this report (i.e. family structures, patriarchy, political systems). Nonetheless, it also has a separate historical, social and cultural background that require particular attention. But this should not lead to the idea of an "African exceptionalism" that precludes positive transformations in the sociopolitical life of its people. All regions, including Africa, bring to the global forum a unique expression of the larger human (universal) experience.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Critical Concerns

In order to develop theoretical knowledge that guides and deepens our understanding of women’s political participation in Africa, this chapter is organised around three central concerns found in the literature. The first focuses on the relevance of sociopolitical contexts for women’s participation, and the resistance to change. For Africa, this requires an appreciation of the impact that both precolonial and colonial institutions have had on the postcolonial present. What is of theoretical import is the fact that elements of all three historical periods interact in the
present. However, interaction means alterations in the colliding institutions. Thus, while precolonial practices have had an impact on both colonial and postcolonial behaviour, they themselves have not gone unaltered. Tamale states emphatically that "any analysis that lacks such a multifocal approach to gender relations in the African context can only be superficial and truncated." Today African women are dealing with layers of problems emanating from a long history of patriarchal institutions from both Western and indigenous systems. The question that arises from the focus on context is: What has been the impact of local customs and institutions on women’s political participation and what solutions are perceived as workable in the short-term or the long-term? Ideas are not timeless and political concepts are closely connected to specific forms of social life. What are the present expressions of gender relations, or patriarchy that require specific attention?

2.1.1 The above statement leads to the second concern which focuses on key concepts that are critical in understanding the movement of women into various political arenas. These include concepts such as democracy, difference, representation in politics, and the State. Both within ‘development’ discourse and academia, in general, many concepts were introduced to Africa through Western education and therefore tend to carry Western definitions. Increasingly however, African scholars and activists are engaged in debates to clarify these and conduct research on the precise expression they have on the African soil. For instance, a recent issue of Africa Today was devoted to theoretical and empirical work on citizenship in Africa, in an effort to understand how the African context and experience reformulate citizenship theory so that scholars begin to move away from "merely grafting mainstream discussions of citizenship onto the disciplines in African Studies". Similarly, female scholars in Africa and the West are interrogating many concepts, including democracy, to see how particular practices or perspectives impact the lives of women. Several important questions arise from these concepts: What is the nature of democracy and the meaning of representation? What are women’s relationships to the State, and what methods/structures have proved successful in gaining a political foothold? What are the parameters of women’s power at the domestic, village, or national level?

2.1.2 Finally, there is the problem of transforming present relationships. The consensus is that increased participation in governance will yield limited results unless there are fundamental changes in society’s perception of ‘female’ and in the way community life is organised. Thus, in addition to gaining access to politics, women need a politics of transformation, since they are circumscribed within political arenas by structures, procedures and ideologies that favour men. According to Tamale, "we need to go beyond numbers and address other important structural factors such as patterns of gender interaction that have a significant bearing on the behavior and the profile of any given institution". To ensure change, critical analysis of gender dynamics is necessary in order to pinpoint obstacles, and patterns of resistance to female participation. How do women behave in male dominated institutions and how do they define power? Those interested in gender and governance must take cognisance of the conditions under which female parliamentarians, corporate executives, or wives are able to make a difference in a given role. What are women’s experiences with State policies, and other measures that were produced in response to various platforms for action? Besides State machineries, attention has been drawn to the explosion of nongovernment organisations (NGOs) on the public scene. Precisely what impact do these organisations have on the process of democratisation and the political
empowerment of women? Finally, the issue of transformation requires an analysis of the impact of external processes. Today’s developments are taking place in the context of globalisation. At the recent women’s conference in New York, delegates from Africa noted in their opening statements that globalisation is heralding a period of economic hardship and uncertainty for the continent. Policies will be more difficult to implement. The meaning and impact of globalisation for women’s incorporation into decision-making must therefore be assessed.

3.0 GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT

3.1 Overview

In paying close attention to history and social context the goal is to bring to light a number of important issues. First, is the need to understand precolonial practices and the way they were altered by colonial and postcolonial experiences. The new policies now being proposed require that policymakers comprehend fully the present situation within their societies, and the particular configurations of gender relations that have developed. Second, in describing indigenous or local institutions researchers must examine carefully earlier perspectives on gender, power, and decision-making in Africa. The bulk of research conducted in the past was informed by both Western oriented and patriarchal perspectives. Much of this misrepresented the everyday lives of African women, or sought to alter behaviour to suit preconceived notions of the kind of political actors women should be. For instance, within sociology and anthropology, concepts developed by mainstream theorists to describe Western societies were later applied to local African communities and often forced into an uneasy fit. Many of these concepts and theories are now under attack by non-Western scholars and people of minority status in the West (including women), in that they distort people’s realities. Finally, our focus on history will uncover the reality of transformation. This serves to emphasise the ubiquity of social change, to counter the ever present idea of unchanging or immutable indigenous customs. Regarding gender relations, this ideology appears to be particularly obstinate and forceful, with important consequences for the implementation of platforms of action and other policies. Tamale captured the need to confront, head on, such intimidating ideologies in the title of her recent book on women and politics in Uganda: *When Hens Begin to Crow*.

3.2 Sociopolitical Contexts: The Precolonial, Colonial and Postcolonial Periods.

Africa’s sociohistorical background can be divided into three periods: the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. On women’s political position, the precolonial era comes across as a period in which there was extensive variation in the political systems of ethnic groups in Africa. Differences existed between the more egalitarian hunting/gathering societies, and agricultural societies, between centralised and noncentralised systems, and between formal office holding and informal domestic or community power. These differences notwithstanding, the general consensus is that women had important public decision-making roles through the positions allocated to queen mothers, upper class women in established kingdoms, and authority embedded in occupations and leadership in community associations. In addition, households were production units and women’s economic contributions to households as farmers, traders,
craftpersons, healers etc, worked in their favour. Also, indigenous systems of patriarchy generally allowed women to run their own public affairs without interference from men and in some instances, dual political systems have been recorded. All of this notwithstanding, a foundation for gender inequality was laid during this period within various marital systems. A few examples will suffice. Customary practices such as gift marriage, ghost marriage, levirate, widow inheritance, forced childhood marriage, polygyny and even bridewealth put women at a disadvantage. For instance, polygyny and Islamic law allow the sexes to begin marriage on an unequal footing. While brides must be single at the time of marriage, men need not be. It was also easy for families to bypass a young girl’s consent. They were less likely to ignore men’s wishes. Also, where the institution of seclusion (purdah) spread with the growth of Islam, women’s public movements were often restricted, their economic independence curtailed, and new social constructions of the ideal woman were developed that altered the parameters of domestic negotiations.

3.2.1 Kabeer’s discussion on power is relevant here. To understand power relations fully, it is necessary to go beyond the usual individualistic framework that focuses on a person’s ability to get her/his way during negotiations. The problem of power goes beyond this, since power is also embedded in values and norms that run through institutions. These norms largely dictate what are off limits for discussion, especially culturally accepted rights and duties of spouses. Kabeer further notes that the interests of the less powerful may remain unarticulated because all participants in the institution (e.g. marriage) subscribe to the dominant view of social reality, do not imagine any alternative and may even see the relationship as divinely ordained. Reviewing the problem of violence, Apai observes, from Sudan, that women regularly contend with this aspect of power. "For example, you can see that there is a problem in a certain house, but the woman cannot talk about it with the husband nor can she identify this problem." Thus, women’s domestic voice may be constrained by what is considered negotiable in terms of the cultural construction of ‘wife’, ‘husband’, ‘mother’, ‘woman’, etc. This broader conceptualisation of power and decision-making needs to be applied to gender relations in the home and in other social institutions.

3.2.2 Women lost significant political ground during the colonial era and after independence, and this resulted in a number of problems. One such problem came from European perspectives on gender relations. In Europe, women’s economic and legal status had begun to decline from the seventeenth century and accelerated with the rise of capitalism. The centre piece of the home was the conjugal unit in which the wife did not have a separate legal existence under common law. Ideally, women and children were confined to the private domestic sphere and economically dependent on a male breadwinner. Transferred to Africa these ideals resulted in women’s economic contributions and rights consistently being overlooked or misunderstood. Time and again, agriculture development projects focused on men, ignoring indigenous gender relations in land use, crop ownership, patterns of remuneration and women’s knowledges. Africa is the region of female farming systems, but men were the ones targeted for training, equipment and projects. African men took advantage of this and often demanded women’s labour on new cash crop farms, while neglecting to compensate their wives. New crops became ‘male’ crops and women were often expected to assist on larger plots of land. Given that household incomes tend not to be pooled, and women, therefore need time to attend to their own income generating activities, the new arrangements were oppressive. Men also took advantage
of the European system of private ownership of land to sell land, evict women or push them onto less fertile plots. In addition to these new cultural practices, colonialism instituted discriminatory measures against women, including the content of educational curricula, laws restricting women to rural areas when men left for urban wages, and lower wages for female labours. On the political front, indirect rule not only overlooked women’s political voice with the development of Native Authority Systems, but allowed local rulers, family heads and other male powerbrokers to explain ‘tradition’ and define customary law. Their versions generally distorted customs in the interest of the powerful, further marginalising women and young people.

3.2.3 Although in most countries adult women got the vote with independence and were allowed to hold office soon after, resistance to women in politics and decision-making remains strong in the postcolonial era. Early on, women’s wings were established within political parties and women fought in the independence wars in several countries. But with few exceptions, such as Uganda and South Africa, the political rewards have been disappointing. The postindependence era has been turbulent with political elites attempting to consolidate power through military or civilian dictatorships. The rash of military coups, civil wars, political assassinations and the growth of corrupt systems based on ethnic patronage, entrenched the belief that the political arena is no place for women. As a result of internal crises and economic shocks from the 1970’s world recession, much of the postindependence era has witnessed declining standards of living in which the already disadvantaged female population has borne a heavy burden. If one takes oil producing and potentially wealthy Nigeria as an example, it has been reported that poverty (the percentage below the poverty line) rose from 34 percent in 1985 to 80 percent in 1998. Beginning in the mid-1970s, structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) were developed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to address the economic chaos. However, SAPs called for reduced public spending on education, social services and government jobs. There is also an emphasis on debt servicing. Today, many African nations spend over 20 percent of their earnings paying back loans. In 1997, for example, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Zimbabwe, Morocco and Ghana, spent 21.2, 21.5, 22, 26.6, and 29.5 percent of their earnings respectively, servicing debts. These and other activities associated with SAPs have affected government efforts to improve standards of living. Withdrawing funds from education has had a direct impact on the likelihood of women seeking political office. In 1992, a United Nations report stated that public spending is positively related to high level positions for women and operates through the money spent on education. Attacks on SAPs have been both internal and external to African and in many instances women’s organisations have spearheaded research which document the toll on women’s lives. In the midst of the problems created by SAPs, governments were encouraged to establish women’s machinery such as special ministries, departments, commissions and programmes to address women’s issues. The idea was well received and does create an avenue to focus on neglected issues, but it is now time to critically evaluate this machinery, since State programmes can just as easily be used for controlling as for empowering women.

3.2.4 In some instances, women’s machinery became a convenient way to attract external funds targeted for "women and development" programmes. A more insidious goal, however, was to use these programmes to control women’s political aspirations. The case of Nigeria reveals how skillful use of programmes can curtail the political activities of women, while the State pretends
to assist them economically and politically. An example is the deft use of the Western "public/private" framework which had been developed to explain the organisation of social life. In this division, the private sphere was perceived as nonpolitical, domestic, and the domain of women and children. It was under the control of men, but out of the reach of the State. Feminist critique of this artificial divide notwithstanding, the framework emphasises women’s domestic roles and subservience to men and is often accepted uncritically by students of Africa. Mama shows how both the Babangida and Abacha military governments manipulated this perspective in Nigeria. Political positions were created for women in the public sphere by projecting a subservient domestic role. Wives of government officials were incorporated into programmes that had been developed for the "transition to democracy", an illusionary process. The criterion for appointment to a public position was being the wife of a government functionary. Writing on this problem, Abdullah states that the automatic appointment to positions in the State funded Better Life For Rural Women Programme (1987) was undemocratic and created a policy of "wifeism" which led to "enforced gender subordination in the guise of women’s activism". The aim was to create modern rural women, under the command of officers’ wives. Rural women would then be reluctant to challenge structures of domination. In manipulating the public/private framework, the government intended that this conservative "image of women as appendages to male power" would spread to all sectors of society. Thus, programmes, ministries and other projects that appear to be progressive need to be closely monitored to ensure they are not in fact modes of resisting the autonomous mobilisation of women. At every stage ideas, concepts or programmes can easily be coopted to serve the goals of those holding on to power. Addressing this issue, Baden and Goetz argue that many people working on women’s issues use texts, concepts and methodologies to collect information that are merely descriptive rather than analytical. They consistently fail to deal with issues of power, gender relations and "how patterns of subordination are reproduced". In order to assess how far women have come, the problem of "gender and power" cannot be ignored. Therefore, the review of projects, programmes and other activities must include the way these are implemented, or manipulated.

4.0 CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

4.1 Democracy

The idea of increased participation in decision-making is grounded in a number of concepts which are still evolving and require closer scrutiny. The most important of these is the concept democracy. It has often been said that although many political systems have claimed to be democratic over the centuries, there has been no truly democratic society, since all have denied some people, including women, decision-making rights. While there is no legal exclusion in most of today’s societies, other barriers still impede the full participation of many. Democracy is believed to be a system of governance that guarantees freedom, equality and the rule of law. According to Dahl, the welfare of the citizenry is guaranteed by five procedures: 1) the inclusion of all affected persons, 2) equal distribution and effective opportunities to participate in the political process; 3) an equal right to vote on decisions; 4) an equal right to choose topics and control the agenda, and 5) a situation that allows participants to develop an understanding of the contested interests. It is obvious that no nation has fulfilled all five of these conditions to date. Even the right to vote, which some see as the cornerstone of democracy, was only belatedly awarded to many groups, including women, after much political confrontation in most
countries around the world. The process of enfranchisement has been painful. Often, different
categories of people within a single nation got the vote at different times. For instance, in
Kenya, European women got the vote in 1919, African men and women who fulfilled certain
criteria received it in 1956. Finally, total adult suffrage was only granted in 1963 at the time of
independence. The right to run for office often came much later but even so, in many countries
social practices are still a barrier. In some African countries it is difficult for a woman to run for
office in her husband’s district since this implies that she is trying to rule her in-laws. Only after
all the above procedures are in place can we say that political power will no longer be
concentrated in few hands, in any nation.

4.1.1 Beyond this, a focus on ‘gender’ draws attention to a number of theoretical and practical
issues that affect women’s incorporation into democratic decision-making. The form of
democracy that is making headway in Africa is liberal democracy. This concept was built on the
idea of free, rational individuals who enter into a social contract and consent to be governed.
Western feminists, including Pateman and Phillips, have argued that this abstract individual is
theoretically a male, who is able to interact in the public sphere outside the home, having
secured the subordination of a wife in a sexual contract in which the latter is not only unfree, but
is perceived as lacking in rationality and other qualities that makes her fit for political life. What
this has meant for women is that formal political suffrage has not erased the underlying problem
of liberal democratic theory: that politics is a male activity and its institutions are masculine.
How are women to be included in this arena? If recognition is not given to the significance of
gender, then women will be required to act like men. Tamale discusses in detail the impact of
this on female legislators in Uganda, where those elected to office are required to adopt the
existing patterns of behaviours and the procedures established by men. In this context not only
do men have a distinct advantage, but many set out to intimidate their female colleagues in
order to keep the latter off balance. Added to this are various forms of sexual harassment and
general social disapproval of elected female officials. Husbands, and relatives remain
unsupportive, and the personal toll on marriages, friendships and parenting is high. There is
therefore pressure within political institutions and pressure outside.

4.1.2 What is required for women to be incorporated into politics as ‘women’ and not as
honorary men? The problem must be addressed at two levels. On one hand, the successful
strategies of individual female decision-makers, need to be documented. However, behavior that
adds to women’s problems must also be analysed, as Tamale attempts to do. Secondly,
pioneering politicians need to be protected by theory that addresses these issues. The work of
Gilligan has led to an understanding that women’s management of life is no less competent than
men’s. Women scholars now argue that the competence of women in politics:

"is not more incomplete than men’s in any simple sense. Perhaps it is not better either in any
simple meaning of the word. This ‘different voice’ expresses itself in the so-called gender gap
among voters, in what women politicians are engaged in and how they handle their tasks, how
they speak, and at the extreme, in the fact that women have begun to shift for themselves, so to
speak in the political party system".

With regard to competence, women’s own interpretations of what constitutes democratic
behaviour must now be taken seriously. In her discussion of the process of democratisation in
South Africa, Temma Kaplan reveals that as democracy evolves, women are becoming important definers. She notes that while the idea of representative democracy is being debated in male institutions at the national level, women in Black/African townships, such as Crossroads, are developing forms of participatory democracy and leadership skills tailored to their situation. The Women’s Committees in these townships are not only concerned with survival issues, but with developing strategies to resist male attempts to exclude women from decision-making. The political authority of committee members’ comes from being immersed in all aspects of a problem. That includes being involved in both its definition and its solution. Democracy at the local level is evolving through praxis. This has the potential of instituting new behaviour that are later accepted as democratic practices. As of now, the formal elements of democracy such as multiparty systems, the right to vote, stand for office, periodic elections, etc. have not led to substantive democracy or democratic political cultures in Africa. Women’s involvement could help challenge the authoritarian practices that African leaders settled into after independence.

4.1.3 To clarify what the process of democratisation entails in Africa, policy makers must be open to the theoretical and empirical contributions women bring to the debate given their focus on gender relations. At the local level, women are interested in practices that move institutions from formal to participatory forms of democracy. Gender analysis allows policymakers to see that in addition to the problem of economic inequalities there are gender issues that are systemic, that lead to domination and block the development of substantive democracy. Gender oppression and exploitation retard the process of democratisation. Those analysing gender must suggest structures and processes that build democratic cultures. For instance, Phillips addresses the idea of deliberative democracy, as a way of overcoming the continued failure of liberal democracy to engender participation. In the interest of social justice, structures that allow discussions and deliberations need to be established. Systems of representation can then be built based on this practice. In many African nations, the rudiments of such deliberative representation systems existed in the precolonial age-grade systems. Although no longer operative in some societies, age-grade systems were built on the idea that each grade sent representatives to the deliberations of the higher age grade. Similarly, the concept of gender quotas or affirmative action is built on the idea of adequate representation. But, the concept of representation itself is under debate.

4.2 The Problem of Representation

The process of democratisation promises greater female representation in decision-making as an important empowerment strategy. However, the concept requires clarification in terms of both its meaning and what it may or may not be able to accomplish for women. First, in most countries equal representation (i.e. Representation in terms of numbers) is obstructed by the socioeconomic status of women. Often lack of education, poverty and minimal leisure time stand in the way of women’s participation in elections. Money, for example remains a major obstacle for women seeking office. This was recently emphasised by Kibibi, chairperson of the inter-party committee in Tanzania which seeks to assist women politically. In order to stand for elections, candidates must pay a fee and the amount differs by party. In the ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) the fee for parliamentary candidacy is Tshs 100,000. Campaigning and other activities all make the cost of running prohibitive. Secondly, in some countries, the
government’s specifications on who is an adult could be a problem. In Algeria for instance, the 1984 Family Code defined women as minors accountable to brothers, husbands or fathers, the recognised adults in society. Thus women could not vote without male permission. Without full citizenship rights, adequate representation is impossible, a point also made by blacks and women during the apartheid regime in South Africa. Nonetheless, neither political suffrage nor higher socioeconomic status necessarily solve the problem of underrepresentation. The experience of Western societies is a case in point. Phillips observes that by 1984 when Norway, Sweden, and Finland had 26 percent, 28 percent and 31 percent female representation in parliament, their educational attainment, employment patterns, domestic responsibilities and voting rights were essentially the same as women in other European societies. Yet in the rest of Europe, female representation was low. The difference appears to lie in the official quota systems inaugurated in the 1970s by the Nordic countries well before the global call for female participation in governance. Phillips also reports that the State in these countries decided to take a firm interventionist stand and institute quota systems as an element of social democracy and justice. Since then, a few African nations, such as Uganda, South Africa and Tanzania have attempted quota systems as part of affirmative action programmes which are promising, but are still fraught with problems.

4.2.1 One of the many problems of affirmative action goes to the very heart of what representation means. Researchers need to be attentive to the wording of new policies. In Uganda, for example, the 1995 constitution stipulated that women have the right to affirmative action seats in government, but that these candidates would be females who merely stood for a certain constituency. Using Pitkin’s analysis of the meaning of representation, Tamale points out that this results in descriptive representation where elected women are only allowed "to partake of the political cake; to participate in decision-making but not to represent women as an interest group; not to carry special responsibilities for women", as would occur if the constitution had allowed the elected officials to be representatives of women. Other interest groups like the armed forces, youth or those with disabilities, may on the other hand have candidates who are bearers of their interests. Female activists need to be clear on the type of representation that affirmative action policies allow. Representation continues to be a contested concept. While some female politicians in Uganda focus on being representatives of women, others have no such intentions. However, Tamale offers the insight that indigenous African perspectives on power-sharing in society suggest we should accept the idea that women are an interest group and that the principle of interest-group representation be extended to them. But even this debate does not cover all the issues. There are still the obvious differences between women. Thus, the problem of ‘gender’ difference gives way to that of social differences between women.

4.2.2 Writing on women in South Africa, Gouws directs attention to social differences based on race, class, sexual orientation, marital status and so forth. Since group needs and interests differ according to social location in society, how well do female politicians, who tend to come from elite or advantaged groups, represent other categories of women? Neither an uncritical celebration of difference nor its neglect will solve the problems emanating from this dimension of representative democracy. As Tamale’s study shows, there is growing tension between female members of parliament and members of their local constituencies. She argues that to date, much of female representation remains ‘virtual’ rather that real. Thus, unless attention is
paid to the problem of difference, representation will not accomplish what it promises.

4.3 Women and the State

The issues discussed above point to the fact that women have not been able to alter their contradictory relationship to the State. Each disappointing encounter with State machineries in the postcolonial era is evidence of more basic underlying problems. Beginning from the time of political independence, women have received mixed messages from State institutions and bureaucracies. On one hand, laws, policies and constitutions have been developed to guarantee women their rights and ensure equality with men in nearly all African countries. Nonetheless, when women appeal to these provisions, they are accused of being anti-African, Westernised or elitist. Where corruption, State patronage or local patriarchal practices are used by those in power to appease various constituents in the quest to seize or retain power, women’s focus on their rights as citizens is seen as disruptive.

4.3.1 Secondly, it is important to keep in mind that the State is not a fixed entity but a network of power relations in which competing groups seek to capture power. In this process women are constantly getting the short shift, although this is not inevitable, since women can begin to see themselves as political agents and inject themselves into these networks. In South Africa, for instance women formed the Women’s National Coalition (1992) to influence the State. Nonetheless, the political class has, in the past, been highly successful in using, assisting or attacking women as a matter of political expedience. Such was the case in Nigerian when women in the North were given the vote in 1979 only because Northern male politicians were worried that Southern men would win the elections, with the assistance of the Southern female vote. Similarly, in a bid to deflect blame for the failures of the economy, political leaders in countries like Ghana, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone regularly denounce market women as economic saboteurs responsible for skyrocketing inflation. It is also ironic that when laws or constitutions are developed to ostensibly close the gender gap, women are usually excluded from the deliberations. In 1964 when new marriage laws were enacted in Cote d’Ivoire, women were not invited to the negotiations. Similarly, Wangari Chege, chairperson of the Grassroots Women’s Association of Kenya revealed that even as late as January 2000, the two organisations authorised to reform the Kenyan constitution had only one appointed woman between them. These manipulative activities of governments have made political analysts wary of even Museveni’s promotion of women’s interests in Uganda. The concern now, is to recognise those organisations/structures and processes that are set up to perform other goals as opposed to addressing women’s political interests. Thus, the analysis of structures, networks and processes must take into account men’s relationship to each other and not just their interaction with women. For, as Johnson argues, much of patriarchy is the ‘conversation’ between men in which women suffer from the fall out. Similarly, a Swahili saying argues that "when two elephants struggle, it is the grass that suffers". Thus cut throat masculine behaviour needs to be reassessed as a social model for politics.

5.0 TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDAS

5.1 Overview: Transforming Gender Relations at all levels
As noted earlier, access to decision-making bodies will serve no purpose unless it is part of a broader framework to transform power relations within society and eliminate the discriminations women consistently experience. This chapter also argues that gender relations must be addressed at every level of society since each reinforces the other. If one begins with the domestic sphere, focus should be on the way sex differences are translated into gender relations, leaving women disadvantaged. Research can no longer deal only with "women", but also the dynamics of gender relations. Smith makes the point that "as social beings we have no choice about being in relationship with those who are different: difference is a relationship. We are only ‘different’ in relationship to those whose social position contrast with our own". There needs to be a transformation in the social position of women in households so that "different" is no longer translated into "inferior". Beyond the household, gender relations in the economic sector must also be transformed to improve women’s employment situation: gender role expectations do not automatically change within the workplace and therefore impact unfavourably the type of work available to women, their chances of promotion and levels of remuneration. Finally, within the political arena from the local to the international level, mainstreaming women is no longer enough. Entrenched gender relations influence how women are expected to behave once they gain access. Mtintso discusses the position of women in the African National Congress (ANC) as follows: "They maintained that the overall agenda was to use Parliament to achieve change while simultaneously changing the institution itself". Women in parliament are acutely aware that getting elected is only the first step and that changes in one sector of society impact other sectors.

5.2 Decision-making at the Household Level

Transformations within the domestic sphere are absolutely essential. There are two basic ways that gender relations within the household have been approached. At one level are questions about the definitions/construction of "female" within a given culture. What characteristics are attributed to each gender and how rigid are these? There is growing evidence that precolonial societies made clear distinctions between ‘sex’ and ‘gender’ and that many gender systems were flexible with the (gender) roles of husband, son or provider readily made available to either sex. While Amadiume discusses the role of male-daughters among the Igbo of Eastern Nigeria, Ogbomo argues that among the Owan of the Nigerian delta region, females are ‘husbands’ in their natal homes where they have influence over males in the family, especially when the female is older. Age and/or seniority count for as much as sex. While these analyses help in understanding gender and authority construction, further work needs to be done to explain why females need to become ‘honorary’ males (i.e. male-daughters, female-husbands) in order to have the authority attributed to men. Women do have authority as mothers and mothers-in-laws, but this still exists within patriarchal structures, which has implications for women. If, hypothetically, women flooded the engineering profession in Nigeria so that most engineers are women, would the prestige/status of the profession plummet? At the level of ‘being’ is there equality between men and women, or does the presence of males enhance a situation? What kind of authority comes with just being male? In countries where women have struggled to shed the legal status of minors, as in Botswana, Sudan, Algeria and Morocco, it is also essential to understand the roots of the ontological construction of each sex, and the policies that have been developed to change this situation.
5.2.1 As Phillips points out "democracy in the home is a precondition for democracy abroad". Yet democracy at home is hampered by various practices which are the expressions of gender inequality. They need not be identical across cultures. In each culture the specific practices (e.g. bridewealth, female genital surgeries) which put women at a disadvantage and the way they do so, need analyses. They are elements of a larger system that needs to be dismantled. A case in point. Social sanctions against men who do housework, even when both spouses work was uncovered by White in a study of lower and middle class households in Johannesburg. By appealing to "tradition" men are able to gain the upper hand in the micropolitics of decision-making within marriage. Both the appeal to tradition and the practice of not doing housework serve hidden functions in gender dynamics. Again, looking at domestic income, studies in Cameroon, Kenya, South Africa and Malawi all show that women are more likely to use their earned income and other resources on the household’s collective needs. Men tend to withhold large portions of their income for personal consumption. This imbalance and the relative poverty it breeds, reduce women’s ability to bargain over other domestic decisions. Thus the meaning of specific practices within the overall system of household decision-making need to be uncovered.

5.3 Transforming Gender Relations Within the Economic Sector

Focus on the economic sector calls for analysis that goes beyond cataloguing discriminatory practices in agriculture, domestic work, and work in the formal or informal sectors. Democratising these activities and laying the foundation for female participation in other sectors require that research examine how specific processes produce gender relations and deprive women of the right to own, control and manage the resources needed for economic production. Women continue to be important contributors to the economy, but must struggle against a wide range of processes and structures, old and new policies that impede their progress. In agriculture, for instance, women have long managed family farms, but are not allowed to own the land or make independent decisions on management. In Lesotho, all important managerial decisions must be referred to migrant husbands working away from home, or to the husband’s relatives. Even where informal land markets have developed and women do obtain land, local authorities are able to confiscate the property at will, citing the ‘traditional’ injunction against female land-ownership. It is therefore important to document land reform and the extent to which these policies address such issues. In South Africa for one, the 1998 Recognition of Customary Marriage Act did not extend property rights to women who had married under customary law before 1998. Thus according to Sharita Samuel "this Act not only permits discrimination but in fact allows and even authorises it". The Act should have been retroactive, but ends up being divisive. Researchers and policy makers will need to review new laws closely to assess their impact. Further, the process of implementation may itself contain obstacles, as in the case of Senegal, where although women now have equal access to land, land is allocated through village councils on which women rarely sit. Fall reports that at deliberations women’s "concerns are often placed at the bottom of the agenda and if they are lucky enough to be allocated land, it is usually marginal land". It is clear that unless women become equal participants in every dimension of land reform decision-making their interests can still be blocked after legal provisions have been made for land ownership. There is also convincing data to show the extent to which women are under-represented as trained personnel in agricultural institutions either as faculty in tertiary institutions, or as extension workers in the field. We need
to know what governments are doing to redress this. Olusi suggests three measures: using special grants/scholarships to attract female students, establishing well-equipped female farms as demonstration units, and developing better conditions of service for women who wish to study agriculture. Any pay gap or promotion differentials between men and women must be eliminated. The problem of credit also has a gender dimension. From her work on credit for female farmers in Nigeria, Olusi concludes that although women rarely default on their loans, few mechanisms have been set up to give them adequate/substantial credit. She believes that with men at the helm of decision-making in finance, there has been, in the past, inadequate support for the type of credit systems required.

5.3.1 In addition to agriculture, women are active in the informal sector throughout Africa. Although much of this work, including trading, food processing, weaving etc., predates colonisation the opportunities and fortunes of women vis-à-vis men were significantly altered as a result of colonial policies, competition from Western goods and the lack of education. Things grew worse with the economic crisis that began in the 1970s, when retrenchment swept through the formal sector. Given their higher level of education, men are more likely to secure new jobs, or retain the old ones. Gender discrimination also means that regardless of qualification, women are at a higher risk of being fired and pushed into the informal sector. However, as a result of Africa’s economic crisis, the informal sector is now perceived as a solution to job creation problems. Many countries, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Cameroon, the Gambia, Malawi, South Africa, etc., have developed skill acquisition programmes and loan schemes for informal sector workers. The details of these need to be reviewed, but it would seem that men are more likely to benefit than women. For one, training programmes are more useful to those who already possess basic literacy skills, skills at least comparable to primary education. Here men have an advantage as shown by Table 2 below.

Table 2 Educational Rates of Men and Women in Selected African Countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Female adult literacy as a % of males (1995)</th>
<th>Enrollment of females as a % of males 1990-1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Primary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Afr. Rep.</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>73</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djibouti</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambia</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>84</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>74</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zumbia</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.unicef.org/sowcoo/stat9.htm

In addition, men tend to monopolise the more lucrative enterprises and have better access to credit. Although some local organisations do target women, they are handicapped by their own dependency on outside funding and the extent of their outreach. Cross-national exchange of knowledge about successful programmes is important here. Webster and Fidler point to credit programmes in Guinea and Burkina Faso that are successful in reaching rural women. Nonetheless, the failure of governments to build infrastructure or provide universal primary
education are major obstacles affecting women’s ability to benefit from these outreach services.

5.3.2 With the exception of a few countries like South Africa, Botswana, Nigeria, Egypt and Algeria, the formal sector in Africa is small and generally employs less than 30 percent of the nation’s labour force. Fewer women than men are found in this sector and they tend to be segregated into certain ‘female’ occupations or marginalised at the bottom of occupational ladders. In South Africa for instance, even though women are well represented in professional and administrative occupations, most are found in just four: nursing and paramedics; teaching; clerical; and sales. In 1992, women comprised only 6 percent of engineers and architects and 8 percent of the ‘protective services’. In Morocco, 63 percent of female urban workers are found in non-skilled or semi-skilled jobs. Not only are unemployment rates higher for women, but special policies are sometimes developed to employ men in the hope of averting civil unrest. Thus, in the early 1990s, this type of policy led to rising unemployment among women as rates fell among men in Morocco. Studies on gender differentials in employment draw heavily from Schultz’s human capital thesis: investment in education is said to yield high returns for both private individuals and the social system or society. Women, it is argued, do not receive as much education as men, and also not the same type of education. By and large, women are less likely to receive scientific or technical training or obtain tertiary education. Griffiths points out that in Morocco women are more likely to be hired if they have tertiary education. Similarly, Willer reveals that the level of education among a sample of female industrialists in Nigeria was well above the national average and that "there is a slight, but significantly positive correlation between the degree of formal education and success of the enterprise measured by its expansion". The call therefore, is to invest in women’s education to ensure they have the same chances as men of getting formal sector employment. Girls are consistently taken out of school to help with housework, farming or to augment household income during economic crises. Childhood marriages still occur, even where, as in Nigeria, it is illegal to withdraw girls from school for marriage. What legal or social recourse do women have under these conditions?

5.3.3 Nonetheless, data on women’s employment rates in the few countries where female education outstrips that of males reveal that the problem goes beyond educational attainment. In Lesotho, for example, female adult literacy is higher than males. Between 1990 and 1997 the secondary school enrolment ratio for women as a percentage of men’s was 148 percent as shown in Table 2. Despite the quality of the female labour force, Marlowe and Setsbi conclude, from a 1991 study of the Labour Construction Unit (Ministry of Works), that "workplace attitudes in Lesotho towards females are often negative; women must then work harder than males to earn recognition. Furthermore, women have production constraints such as child care and household duties". Casual labour in the unit was recruited within the village and village chiefs favoured males. Male supervisors outnumbered females by 10 to 1. Once again, when new activities are integrated with old structures (village councils) care must be taken to assess the impact on women.

5.3.4 The fate of women has never been solely dependent on problems internal to African nations. From the precolonial to the present, Africa’s position within the world economic order has had a significant bearing on women’s economic and social lives. As Escobá points out, the very concept of development was constructed within imperial and neocolonial relationships in which all sectors of Third World societies were targeted for change. The latest process to sweep
across the globe, globalisation, is having a profound impact on Africa through the many policies (including SAPs) and treaties (e.g. GATT) aimed at speeding up world economic growth and the flow of capital. African States, institutions and universities are, however, wary of the promises of globalisation. It would appear that Africa is likely to be a major loser as a result of new trade agreements and global policies. For instance, ECA has suggested that the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations (1994) does not bode well for Africa:

"the annual gain in global income from the implementation of agreement is estimated to be US $213 billion in 2002, and each year thereafter, while the gain may amount to US $500 billion annually according to new GATT estimates. The benefits thereof are manifestly blased in favour of the industrialised countries which are projected to collect 70 percent of the trade generated revenue. Of the remaining 30 percent, 27 percent goes to Asian countries and 3 percent to Latin America. Africa is expected to lose up to US $3 billion per annum during this initial period -----

The impact of this economic loss will be felt more by the disadvantaged than the wealthy groups in Africa. It is important to remember, as McMichael points out, that ‘development’ and globalisation are not identical processes and must be understood as leaving different imprints. With the old development project, each nation attempted to increase its economic output and improve people’s standard of living. National economies ran parallel to each other. Governments were expected to be powerful and control the affairs of the nation. With globalisation, corporations, transnational banks and global decision-making bodies (e.g. WTO) become the new powerbrokers. Nations compete to find their niche within a single ‘world factory’ system and the political power of States takes a backseat to the global market. An emphasis on privatisation and the deregulation of trade, allows capital to move freely through more ‘open’ economies.

5.3.5 According to Mishra, this process favours capital and leads to "a scaling down, if not dismantling, of measures aimed at protecting workers’ living standards and humanising working conditions". These safety nets are now perceived as impediments to the profitable movement of labour and are costly for capital. It spells doom to the idea of social citizenship which had been responsible for the growth of welfare measures provided by (strong) states, following World War II. The Nordic countries led the way with their emphasis on social democracy, but even so, the ‘development’ States in Third World nations followed this lead. Today, however, the social rights of citizens are in conflict with the economic rights of individuals and corporations, as globalisation intensifies. Under these conditions it becomes almost impossible for economically weak governments, such as those in Africa, to sustain welfare programmes for the poor. Further, the labour force becomes increasingly insecure and women are already in a weak market position. Their caretaking gender roles also saddle them with health and other economic responsibilities when governments ‘privatise’ services. Public policies have an enormous impact on the time, energy and monies women are required to dispense, on a daily basis, for households to survive. Just as globalisation is having differential impact on technologically advanced and less developed countries, it can be expected to bear down more heavily on the less empowered within a single nation. We need to know what counter measures exist to help women.

5.4 Transformations on the Political Front
Interest in women’s participation in politics turns attention to several important issues. One problem is to assess how best to increase the numbers of female politicians at all levels of government from the village councils to parliament. Another issue is to ensure that women are not left out of the new political processes now emerging, for instance, regarding conflicts. With escalating violent conflict within and between countries, it is acknowledged that war and civil unrest have a gender component with women at risk of "rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization and other forms of sexual violence". The gross underrepresentation of women at all levels of peace negotiations needs to be addressed. Finally, outside of the formal structures of politics, there are other avenues for participation including social movements, protests and nongovernment organisations (NGOs). Politicians are constantly in negotiations with these pressure groups which have the potential of influencing the democratisation process.

5.4.1 Data suggest that in addition to affirmative action, electoral formulas also influence the likelihood of women winning seats in parliament. Voting for a single candidate means a winner take all formula. With proportional representation systems, the electorate votes for a party. The party then allocated seats in parliament based on the percentage of votes received. Under this system, parties choose those to fill the seats. Women do better under proportional representation, than single member formulas, although there are no absolute guarantees. Parties must be persuaded to put women on their list of candidates, but this can be done through affirmative action. Comparative data is needed on how electoral processes work in different African nations and what the impact of affirmative action has been for different types of electoral systems.

5.4.2 Nonetheless, once women are in government, do they make a difference? The literature suggests that they could have an impact but only after they have reached the critical mass needed to tip the balance when voting on a bill. Material from the USA and Europe indicate that women support different types of bills compared to men. In her chronicles of life as a female politician in the USA, Harriet Woods reports that women in the US congress are more likely to support bills that benefit women and families than their male counterparts. These include health, domestic violence and gun control issues raging in the USA. For instance, during the Clinton administration, "81 percent of the women in Congress voted for a ban on assault weapons, compared to just 46 percent of the men". On the issue of political style, there is also the promise that women behave differently once they overcome intimidation and their fear of new political environment. Woods also reports that through women the USA is witnessing a "commonsense approach and a readiness to talk from the heart," in congress and that men in congress felt women brought a different style and "seem to build consensus more easily". Thus the idea that women must prove themselves by playing it the masculine way has to be rethought. In Zimbabwe, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda, female MPs have been known to form caucuses across party lines for the good of the nation.

5.4.3 Conflict resolution and peacekeep have become major areas where decisions are made that have profound impact on millions of lives. Women’s possible role is being recognised and African women are demanding a stronger voice, particularly since Africa intends to be in the forefront of handling its own conflicts, unlike the recent past. They need to be injected at all levels from education and training programmes in nonviolent conflict, to peacekeeping,
peacebuilding and reconstruction. The argument has been made that women use different models from men to build peace, including familial as opposed to competitive or militaristic models. Information is needed on the experience and positions of women who have been trained in programmes like those developed by the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes in the Sudan, to see what transformative impact different styles of conflict resolution have in communities and under what conditions these methods are useful.

5.4.4 Beyond State institutions democratic practices are said to develop in civil society where protests, social movements and NGOs operate. Attention has been turned to civil society as an arena for transformative activities by the citizenry. Furthermore it is assumed that elected officials are in constant contact with people in civil society. Are the hopes pinned on civil society justified? Is it a training ground and stronghold for democracy? This segment of public life is: "the realm of organised social life that is voluntary, self generating and self supporting, autonomous from the State, and bound by a legal order or set of shared rules" Community associations in civil society are not new to Africa and existed in the precolonial era. However, they grew in the postindependence era and much of this was because, according to Ihonvbere, corrupt States had become irrelevant to the welfare of the citizenry. The focus is now on NGOs, both local and foreign and their promise to perform four functions: empower, educate, advocate and be a watchdog. Unfortunately, unless care is taken NGOs may not turn out to be the panacea for democratisation. Many merely serve the survival needs of communities and provide services neglected by governments. By the early 1990s, 25 percent of all official foreign aid in Uganda were funneled through NGOs, 45 percent of Tanzanian hospitals and 35 percent of Ghana’s outpatient care were administered by NGOs. Further, governments are increasingly intolerant of the advocacy and watchdog roles of NGOs. In Nigeria, for instance, Imam and Shettima point out that the military government was very hostile to the left-leaning Women in Nigeria (WIN), and in Egypt, the government passed a bill in 1999 to curtail the independence of NGOs. Also, Mama reports that the entire NGO scene is as yet not sensitive to gender analysis. Dicklitch questions their role as a democracy training ground, since dependence on foreign aid encourages top/down decision-making and policy development from abroad.

5.4.5 These problems notwithstanding, information is needed on the political role of different types of NGOs. They can be broadly classified into 3 groups: 1) indigenous or local community-based associations, created and managed by members (market women’s associations, ensure credit unions, cooperatives, improvement/progressive societies), 2) local associations organised by the elite/educated, often but not always, to assist the poor (Uganda Law Society, Green Belt movement, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions, Women’s National Coalition-South Africa), and 3) regional or foreign-based organisations (Oxfam, CUSO, UNIFEM, Committee for Health in Southern Africa, Akina mama wa Africa). The extent to which these alternative structures are dominated by external agendas, are able to manage their own affairs, are geared to strategic interests, or are able to influence policy makers, affect their ability to serve transformative roles. Some governments (South Africa, Nigeria, Uganda) have established mechanisms to register and monitor the range of NGOs working within their borders. This provides a database to assess the role of NGOs.

6.0 METHODOLOGIES FOR RESEARCH ON GOVERNANCE
6.1 From Theory to Data Collection

Methodology in its broadest terms is concerned with how knowledge is produced, distributed and consumed. In producing knowledge, epistemological decisions have to be made about what constitutes knowledge given one’s theoretical framework, and where this knowledge might be located. All of this influences the precise methods or techniques employed to gather data. Given the conceptual emphases in this chapter, and the overall interest in assessing how far nations have come in implementing the various platforms for action and other communiqués published from conferences, workshops and seminars, certain methodologies become necessary in the collection of data. Data should be collected from both primary and secondary sources. Nonetheless, all data must be attentive to four methodological approaches. These are the interpretive, intersectional, critical and historical approaches. Secondary material obtained from official bureaucracies, research institutes/centres, University departments, or international agencies need to be scrutinised for the extent to which they incorporate these perspectives. In addition to demographic or descriptive statistics, research data obtained from these and other sources should, by now, be sensitive to the type of information needed to bring about changes in governance. A paucity of interest in these methodological approaches is itself an indication of problems and needs to be documented. Original data collected for this report must also keep these methodologies in mind.

6.1.1 To grasp the reality of women’s situations, changes in people’s behaviour or resistance to change, data collection must go well beyond gathering descriptive ‘facts’ and statistics, but must understand the significance of the information as well as its meaning to those involved. This is essential to the process of altering relationships, particularly power relations. The material presented in this chapter requires a focus on gender as power relations and underscores three aspects of gender. The first deals with what Kabeer refers to as gender auditing whereby a gender lens is used to interpret an event. How does the information read from the perspective of women’s strategic interests? A focus on women’s own interpretations of their experience must be part of the evaluation process. In 1992, Mbilinyi, complained that there is a dearth of information about women as social actors in their own right. Similarly, Collins argues that there is still too much emphasis on imposing the ‘scientific’ perspective of the ‘expert’, on research data. The interpretation of the social world by women themselves will facilitate the transformative agenda. The idea that everyone has the capacity to create knowledge, but that women are often not the accepted interpreters of the world around them, is an issue Mama has been addressing through workshops, projects and presentations, as the Director of the African Gender Institute at the University of Cape Town. The second issue in interpretive gender analysis addresses the problem of gender relations from the home environment to national and international political institutions. Any progress on the part of women has implications for male/female relationships. The focus on gender inequalities points to the need for information on the dynamics of gender relations in addition to data on women. Finally, gendered lens demands that data be obtained on relationships between men and on male strategies that facilitate or hinder transformations.

6.1.2 Difference means that emphasis must be put on intersectionality or women’s multiple identities. First, it is important to discover whether statistics are disaggregated by sex, age, religious affiliation, region, and so forth. This information is necessary for policy decisions that
are sensitive to difference. Their impact on women in different social locations should be known. General solutions for a ‘universal’ woman are unlikely to work. Case studies on what works and under what conditions, are necessary. For example, on the issue of empowerment, how do different categories of women define or use power, vote or construct their political concerns in public? How are coalitions or alliances developed between different categories of women? The case of South Africa’s Women’s National Coalition and its "Women’s Charter" (1994), or the 140-member coalition of Nigerian NGOs on Health, the Women’s Health Organisation of Nigeria, are both examples where difference and collaboration came together.

6.1.3 A critical perspective means that information is not taken at face value. Political, legal and other measures designed to enhance governance need to be closely scrutinised. Where constitutions have been upgraded, and Commissions, Offices of Ombudsman or Ministries of Women’s Affairs have been established, a close review of their impact should be undertaken. How well were women represented in the drafting of a new constitution? What is the connection between the new machinery and important institutions, and what resources have been made available? Finally, a critical assessment of traditions and customs in imperative at this time. An appeal to tradition may simply be an attempt to conceal social privileges: men’s views on tradition conceal sexual, economic and prestige benefits while they seek to secure the ‘modern’ benefits of Western encounter, in an attempt to have it all. Menkraus argues, for instance, that when evaluating traditional institutions of conflict management we must be critical of what is actually transpiring. In his study of conflict resolution in Somalia, elders revered as peacemakers within small communities, may not play the same role in the new militarised context where conflict is between larger segments of society. They may seek to capture all rewards for their group rather than seek peace.

6.3.4 Finally, research should be historical. If women are to be perceived as social actors, creators of knowledge, competent managers of resources and experienced decision-makers, then data are needed on how women are changing old practices. First this moves the focus away from an overemphasis on victimisation. Women have been resisting oppression from the precolonial era to the present and their successes need to be documented. It is also true that some categories of women (class, region, ethnic) help oppress others. Is research sensitive to this history? Mbilinyi argues, for example, that the Tanzania Media Women Association (TAMWA) has at times reproduced stereotypes about women as victims even though TAMWA’s own history and struggles contradict this view of history. Second, history highlights changes that are taking place. Training programmes be they for income generation, conflict management or political leadership skills, all point to the fact that history is in the making. Narratives, life histories and longitudinal research should be located to highlight these changes. An historical approach uncovers those aspects of indigenous institutions and practices that have survived, and in what form. To return to Menkraus’s research on ‘traditional’ Somali methods of conflict management. He reminds us that African institutions have been changing all along, "that what we have come to understand as traditional conflict management actually represents a synthesis of time-honored practices and new techniques, as communities adapt their customs to cope with fundamentally new types of conflict--------the evidence from Somalia clearly suggests that these practices are adaptable and dynamic, not static and timeless". (emphasis added) In his own work, he makes the distinction between traditional processes and traditional actors. This way, new actors (women) or new institutions (nontraditional NGOs) can be included in old
processes (village committees meetings). The attention to history thus underscores the importance of past changes and the vision of future possibilities in governance.

7.0 JUSTIFICATION FOR AN AFRICAN WOMEN’S REPORT ON GENDER AND GOVERNANCE

The United Nations, individual governments and NGOs around the globe recently completed the fifth United Nations Conference on Women in New York entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century". The aim was to reaffirm commitment to the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action through an assessment of the progress made throughout the world on the is critical areas for priority action outlined at Beijing. While commending the ground covered in many countries, the major concern of deliberations were the obstacles that so far hinder the full implementation of the Beijing agenda for the empowerment of women. In the first (unedited) document issued on the conference conclusions, the United Nations General Assembly forcefully outlined the actions and initiatives that must be taken in the future, if headway is to be made. High on this list of issues that need to be urgently addressed is the problem of women’s full participation in governance:

Experience has shown that the goal of gender equality can be fully achieved only in the context of renewed relations among different stakeholders at all levels. The full effective participation of women on the basis of equality in all spheres of society is necessary to contribute to this goal". (emphasis added)

Over the past thirty years gender equality in governance has emerged as a major issue in equality. It is both a goal and a means. As a goal, it is important for social justice and to help strengthen communities and nations. In the present fast changing world, no nation can waste its labour and skills. Women bring skills and competencies to decision-making and as citizens they have the right to participate in the making of their own future. As a means, the full representation of women in governance ensures that policies made on health, education, land reform, the environment, agriculture, etc., can be gender sensitive. Participation in decision-making allows women to alter male constructed institutions and hold participants accountable in promoting gender equality in all areas of society. The conference document calls for increased efforts in terms of political will, programmes, the monitoring of policies and evaluations of their implementation. Each region and nation is therefore required to undertake a major process of stock-taking. The material presented in this conceptual framework reveals that basic and comparative information on policies, and initiatives, and their impact needs to be obtained on the situation in Africa. While many governments and NGOs have responded to the Beijing Platform, little is known through systematic data collection about the progress that has been made and the obstacles encountered. Africa still lags behind on the collection of descriptive statistics regarding where women are located in institutions, organisations and programmes. Further, the assessment of how women fare in both old and new programmes is weak. The report will serve the purpose of bringing together in a systematic manner information that is presently scattered across the continent, it will indicate what new information needs to be collected in the medium and long-term, as well as highlight those factors that still impede women’s movement into governance structures.
8.1 Review

This chapter developed the conceptual framework and methodological approaches to be employed in the report on gender and governance in Africa. In order to assess the situation in Africa, and indicate where progress still needs to be made, three interlocking theoretical concerns were discussed. At the broadest level and running through all research is the recognition that institutions, beliefs and practices existing today are a culmination of the interaction of precolonial, colonial and postindependence systems. Attention must be paid to the specific ways this interaction has affected and continues to affect women. How did incoming systems of landownership, educational curricula or religious beliefs affect women’s decision-making roles and how have women attempted to gain more power?

8.1.1 Exclusion from power and decision making often starts with the very definition of concepts that construct certain human beings as acceptable and others as not acceptable agents or actors. In the area of governance, many of the concepts developed to allow participation need to be interrogated with a gender lens. Concepts such as democracy, difference, the State etc. were originally constructed with underlying assumptions of male competence and female incompetence. The report should draw attention to the need to redefine such political concepts to make them inclusive of women. A major issue here is that women should no longer be perceived as deviant intruders in masculine domains. If the meaning of these concepts (and the activities they describe) must change, the questions, beliefs and practices presently being developed by women must be taken seriously. Thus, for example, new participatory practices by women in their local organisations need to be accepted as part of the evolving concept of democracy. New styles of participating in parliament should also not be dismissed off hand. It is important therefore to highlight the type of policies, programmes and resources that allow women to participate at all levels as women, and not as honorary men.

8.1.2 Once it is accepted that change is needed in our assumptions about what is natural for men and women in governance, then attention must turn to empirical transformations. This chapter emphasises that we need to highlight policies and activities that have a transformative agenda regarding gender relations in households, in the economic sector and on the political front. Many of these begin with government laws and regulations on equal rights in marriage, property, pay, education and so forth. In addition, special attention is needed on issues of childcare facilities, sexual abuse, violence and maternal health. Countries need to be evaluated on the degree to which progress is being made in eliminating obstacles that women themselves define as problematic. Increasingly, the role of NGOs in civil society is being studied for its impact on the democratisation process. Women are particularly active within these organisations and we need to know the extent to which NGOs serve as training grounds, routes to empowerment and advocacy. What type of organisations become watchdogs, able to hold the State and the political elite accountable? The extent to which NGOs are driven by donor agendas and finances requires assessment because many of the social services provided by the State are being privatised, taken over by NGOs and funded from abroad.

8.1.3 The foregoing arguments suggest that certain methodological approaches should be
adopted. These include the interpretive, intersectional, critical and historical approaches. With these four, there will be an effort to go beyond the collection of descriptive statistics to analysing what the information means to women’s strategic interests in decision-making and power sharing. Gender lens must be used to interprete events, ideologies, customs and statistics. Also, women’s own interpretations must be sought out. Further, the differences among women in different social positions and the fact that each individual is a mosaic of identities means that intersectional issues must be reviewed. How do policies affect different groups of women in addition to the differential impact on men and women. Critical analysis is required so that distinctions can be made between what appears to exist on the surface and what lies beneath. This is important when assessing resistance to change at both the institutional and individual levels. Programmes and projects that have been crafted to pacify and forestall real transformation must be uprooted. Thus, close attention needs to be paid to the implementation of constitutions, affirmative action programmes, land reform policies, etc. History is important because that is the only way we are made aware of what existed in the past and how it is being transformed today. Incoming Western concepts, institutions and practices will always interact with local cultures. This needs to be monitored to ensure that women are in fact gaining ground rather than losing it.

8.1.4 Given the conceptual outline provided in this chapter the report should include a situational analysis and suggestions for improving women’s role in governance in the following areas, which cover gender relations from the domestic sphere to national political institutions: 1) Gender and governance within the family; 2) Gender in politics and public office; and 3) Gender and senior management. In addition to these issues, the report can make significant contribution to the evaluation of women and governance in Africa by constructing a Gender In Governance Index (GIGI) to serve as a statistic for comparing countries within Africa in the same manner that the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Gender Development Index (GDI) allow comparisons among nations across the globe.

15 GENDER AND GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE FAMILY

9.1 Chapter Guidelines

The first key sphere where data are to be located is the household. Women’s participation in decision-making on the domestic front not only affects their own lives, but impacts those of their children and other dependents, including the elderly. Different family structures have differential effects on women and these need to be investigated. Marital laws, customary rules, and religious doctrines should be investigated for their consequences on women’s abilities to make decisions. Section 13 contains a list of the types of institutions already engaged in collecting these data. This information is crucial for evaluating how the law intentionally discriminates, unintentionally affects women differently form men, or fails in its application. The legal rights of women under patrilineal, matrilineal and bilateral descent systems need to be understood. This includes property rights, inheritance, child custody, widowhood, maintenance rights and so forth. The present status of various forms of customary marriages must be scrutinised, since these have an impact on women’s voices. What is the prevalence of ‘ambush’/coerced marriages, childhood marriages, polygyny etc? What is the impact of such unions on reproductive decision-making, for example? An important accomplishment of women
who attended the 1994 world population conference in Cairo was global acceptance of the idea that transformations in the decision-making powers of women in the home reduces fertility rates. Draconian population policies and questionable contraceptive distribution programmes are unwarranted and often dangerous to women’s health. Changing the status of women in the home lowers birthrates. This in the long run will impact health, the environment and other resources. This chapter should investigate why women are often unable to claim the rights already available to them in the law. Underlying social and economic deprivations need to be addressed. How does education, health, credit facilities and gender attitudes impact decision-making in households? Finally, policy suggestions to address problems should be outlined.

16 GENDER IN POLITICS AND PUBLIC OFFICE

10.1 Chapter Guidelines

This chapter has emphasised the fact that women make a difference in politics including the issues they address, in redefining political concepts and in style. The proposed chapter on political decision-making will first pay attention to where women are located in political structures. Information is then needed on how they obtained such positions: through clearly laid out rules and democratic processes or by being hand-picked to serve the interests of patriarchal groups? Finally, the chapter will focus on problems women encounter and the short, medium, or long-term policies and measures required to alleviate these problems.

10.1.1 Beginning with State structures of governance, the position of women in the judiciary, legislative, executive and military branches need to be tabulated at the local, district and national/parliamentary levels. It is important to obtain historical data where possible, to show trends. Where have women gained or lost political ground over the past 30 years? How far up the judiciary system can women be found? Is there a pattern of sex segregation that leaves women at lower levels? What type of cabinet positions do women tend to hold? Is there a pattern of women being assigned to the traditional posts of health and social welfare? It is also important to compare systems of elections across Africa, to see how women fare under single member and proportional representation formulas. Further, affirmative action policies need to be scrutinised both for their wording and in their implementation. Finally, are women positioned in the foreign service, and at what levels? When one controls for years of service and experience, are female ambassadors receiving equity in terms of postings?

10.1.2 In addition to the branches of government, political decision-making occurs within political parties, law enforcement agencies, peace commissions, or tribunals and various parastatals. Regarding political parties, are there separate and active women’s political wings or caucuses? Is this segregation more successful in empowering women than the complete integration/assimilation of women into the mainstream of parties? The recent rift in the Kenyan Women’s Political Caucus, founded in 1997 to empower women after the government rejected the motion for affirmative action, points to some of the budding problems now experienced within women’s organisations. The Caucus split into two factions in July 2000 as a result of "lack of communication, lack of operational structures and lack of transparency on both sides of the divide. It is a story of invested interests and a general disregard for democratic principles and processes". Such problems underscore the fact that not all of women’s obstacles can be
placed at the door of men. Ideological, social and personal differences between women often come into play. Where possible case studies of such tensions and rifts should be collected to uncover what needs to be corrected.

10.1.3 A review of NGOs as well as their classification is required. This chapter attempts a tentative three-way classification, which can serve as a basis for more comprehensive work. In looking at churches, the media, trade unions and other organisations, it is important to assess the level of autonomy from both the State and donor agencies. What positions do women hold in these organisations? Again, information is needed on whether or not women generally hold only traditional roles such as secretary, treasurer and vice-president. Studies of trade unionism suggests that, in the past, women have tended to shun union positions as unbecoming of females. How is this pattern changing as women gain more education and economic status? Orthodox Christian churches in Africa have been more resistant to giving women power than either indigenous religions or the new charismatic or alternative churches. Is there change with the Orthodox churches and what types of positions do women hold in new alternative Christian churches? If the leadership profile is different, what impact has this had on the lives of women in the general congregation? Does it alter decision-making patterns within families resulting from church doctrines or practices? Finally, attention needs to be paid to one growing area of concern: peacekeeping. Women complain that even though there are specific gender dimensions to war, civil unrest and political crises (e.g. rape, childcare, pregnancy as a refugee, etc.), women are not given adequate say in peace negotiations. Surprisingly, in June 2000, the Sudan Women Advocacy Mission received the National Peace Foundation (NPF) prize form the USA for its work in training sessions on conflict resolution, regional programmes and international advocacy. While data are needed on the positions women hold in such organisations, it is important to know the extent to which there is interaction and exchange between institutions established by men and those developed by women. On issues of peacebuilding, there needs to be collaboration. What positions do women hold in these alliances?

17 GENDER AND SENIOR MANAGEMENT

11.1 Chapter Guidelines

Managerial positions exist in both the formal and informal sectors of the labour force and are held by entrepreneurs as well as employees of private and public/government establishments. Women entrepreneurs in Africa largely own small scale businesses in the informal sector that are commercial, as opposed to manufacturing. Ngau and Keino’s discussion of women in Nairobi is typical: "Overall, a majority of the women entrepreneurs come from a disadvantaged social background as concerns business operations. They are disadvantaged with respect to credit, ownership of land, having low literacy rates and low paying previous employment" Others have shown that there is little reinvestment in these businesses. It is important to learn what credit, training and legal measures have been implemented to enable women to develop better managerial skills and expand their businesses. Even though women dominate agriculture, agro-based loans are more likely to be given to men and therefore few women own large food processing businesses. Information is needed on case studies of successful female entrepreneurs and the factors which led to this success.
11.1.1 It is known that women make a poor showing in the formal sector. When employed, they tend to be at the lower levels, with poor pay. They are also segregated in caretaking roles. On the issue of promotion and movement up occupational ladders, the problems of the "glass-ceiling", "revolving door" and "glass escalator?" require investigation. What are the historical trends? United Nations data on female administrators and managers for 1994 and 1995 reveal that in most African nations fewer than 15 percent of these employees were women. In Tunisia, Algeria, Zambia, Togo, Zimbabwe and Gambia for instance, 12.7, 5.9, 6.1, 7.9, 15.4 and 15.5 percent respectively were women. This information is not broken down into low level, intermediate and senior management. Gender specific data will reveal more information. Research on problems women face as they seek promotion need to be located. Further, the constraints women encounter once they reach the senior levels of management need to be outlined. In the USA, problems of mentoring, old boys networks, institutionalised male corporate behaviour and sexual harassment have all featured in the lives of senior administrative and management women. Both corporate policies and State laws should be reviewed for the assistance they afford women.

11.1.2 Although teaching is perceived as a female occupation, the percentage of female teachers tends to drop as one moves from pre-primary to tertiary institutions. Information on the female distribution of headmistresses and principals in preprimary, primary and secondary schools is important. At postsecondary levels information on the volume of women who are at the professorial level, heads of departments, directors of units, deans of faculty and vice chancellors/rectors of institutions should be obtained. Whether or not affirmative action educational programmes exist that facilitate the movement of women into these higher reaches, also need to be investigated.

12.0 THE GENDER IN GOVERNANCE INDEX (GIGI)

12.1 Chapter Guidelines

An important innovation for the African Women’s Report-2000 is the construction of a Gender In Governance Index (GIGI). This will be a composite index made up of indicators to be suggested below. The index will be constructed in the tradition of other United Nations composite indices such as the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Human Development Index (HDI). The GIGI will measure the average achievement attained by African nations in the area of women’s participation in governance. This index will allow comparisons between nations and in the future, between the same nation at different points in time. Gender indices often reveal that gender inequality does not depend on income or a nation’s wealth. In other words it attempts to focus on gender relations as an issue that is separate from wealth or a nation’s stage of development.

12.1.1 The composite index will need to cover a number dimensions that relate to women’s empowerment. First there needs to be an indicator of the citizenship status of women. Are women minors or adults according to the law? Can they own property, bequeath to their children citizenship status or be legal witnesses to cases in court? Following this, an indicator is needed to rank election systems. Is there a proportional representation system, for instance? Are there restrictions on running for office, such as educational attainment, cost of registration or
ownership of property that differentially affect men and women? Thirdly, indicators are necessary to assess the representation of women at each level of the political (local, district, national). Each level may have its own indicator. Similarly, an indicator should focus on whether or not a nation has accepted a quota system. Another indicator will assess the frequency with which gender specific issues are actually discussed in parliament over a specified time period (e.g. one year).

12.1.2 Other issues that facilitate female participation are policies and reforms in specific domains. Thus an indicator of gender sensitive policy reforms should be developed. These reforms may include constitutional reforms, education, land, or population policies. Thus for instance, a country may already define women as adults in the constitution, but has not undertaking major constitutional review in decades. Again, one indicator of a nation’s seriousness over female empowerment is increased allocation of resources to women’s machineries. Again, a time-frame of say five years could be used (e.g. 1995-2000). What is important here is not the absolute volume of the allocation, but the percentage of the budget that it represents. In this way, gender and development/women’s affairs ministries can be ranked in relation to other ministries. Another important indicator is whether or not a nation records the contribution of women’s work to the national economy. Within the workforce, other indicators should measure the representation of women in formal sector positions. These include senior managers/administrators as well as senior professional/technical staff.

12.1.3 The above suggestions are not exhaustive and the index may include other measures that are perceived as relevant. The aim of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive index to rank individual countries. After the initial exercise has been completed, the chapter should make concrete policy recommendations for improving the GIGI index to ensure its continued relevance in the future.

13.0 ORGANISATIONS WHERE DATA CAN BE LOCATED

Over the past 30 years hundreds of organisations, research centers and initiatives have been established that collect data on women, development and inequality. Below is a brief list of institutions that can be contacted to obtain country specific or regional data on the concerns outlined in this chapter.

A. Women’s Machinery

- Ministries of Gender and Community Development (e.g. Rwanda, Uganda, Madagascar, Zimbabwe)

- Ministry or Dept of Women’s Affairs (e.g. Nigeria, Cameroon, Botswana, Ivory Coast, Malawi, Namibia, Egypt, Gambia)

- Gender Central Planning Unit: Ministry of Finance and Planning (e.g. Lesotho)

B. National Organisations for Women
South Africa – National Council of Women: President, Ms Heather Tracey

Nigeria – National Council of Women’s Societies: President, Ms Emily Aig – Imoukhuede


Uganda – National Association of Women’s Organisations in Uganda

Nigeria - National Committee on Women and Development: Dr Simi Johnson

Nigeria – National Commission for Women (Ojobo Ode). Box 229 Abuja

National Federation of Liberian Women P.O. Box 2703, Monrovia

Comite de Concertation et Coordination Des Associations (Madagascar)

Association des Femmes Ivoriennes. P.O. Box 2005 Abidjan

Research/Resource Centres

Uganda Gender Resource Centre. P.O. Box 9933, Kampala.

Association of African Women Research and Development. P.O. Box 35044, Dar es Salaam.

Women in Law and Development in Africa (WILDAF-Uganda, Ghana, Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa)

Women Managers in Eastern and Southern Africa

Women’s Research and Documentation Project (P.O. Box 35018 Dar Es Salaam)

Zimbabwe Resource Centre and Network.

Women Study Group. P.O. Box 35169 Dar es Salaam

African Women’s Media Centre (Dakar www.awmc.com)

Group for Democratic Development (Egypt)

Women in Development Research Unit (Centre for Inter-Racial Studies) Salisbury-Zimbabwe

International Association for the Advancement of Women in Africa (ASAWA) Accra, Ghana

African Training and Research Center for Women (ECA, Addis Ababa)

Southern African Research and Documentation Centre (SARDC) Harare, Zimbabwe
Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA-Lesotho, South Africa, Swaziland, Botswana, Zimbabwe)

Association of African Women for Research and Development (Codesria, Box 3304 Dakar)

Group for Democratic Development (GDD-Egypt)

Zambia Association for Research and Development (Box 37836, Lusaka)

Empower and Action Research Centre (37 Giwa St., Lagos)

Women’s Health and Action Research Centre (Benin City, Nigeria)

Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER, Ibadan, Nigeria)

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies. (Egypt)

D. Networks/Regional Organisations

Women’s Network (Uganda)

Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD:Senegal)

African Women’s Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) Director, Sara Longwe

Federation of African Women Educators (FAWE)

Federation of Women’s Networks

Tanzania Gender Network Programme (TGNP-Box 8921 Dar es Salaam)

Akina Mama wa Africa (Director, Bisi Adeleye-Fayemi)

Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) University of West Indies, Barbados

The Network Women’s Programme: Open Society Foundation for South Africa (Box 23161, Claremont, S.A.)

University-Based Units

Uganda – Women’s Studies: Makerere University P.O. Box 7062 Kampala

The Liberian Federation of Women’s Organisations – University of Monrovia
Gender and Development Research Program (Institute of Southern African Studies): National University of Lesotho

Women’s Research and Documentation Centre (WRDC): University of Ibadan.

Gender Programme: Social Sciences, University of Namibia (Windhoek)

Centre for Social Research, University of Malawi (Box 278, Zomba)

African Gender Institute: University of Cape Town, S.A.

Centre for African Studies: Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique.

Initiatives/Programmes

Democracy and Governance Program in Nigeria (implemented by John Hopkins University 1997)


Liberian Women’s Initiative

Women in Development Southern Africa Awareness, (WIDSAA), Harare, Zimbabwe.

Other NGOs

Media Women Association (e.g. Malawi, Tanzania)

Women Lawyers Association (e.g. Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, etc.)

South Africa Commission on Gender Equality (Braamfontein Centre, S.A.)

Gender Action and Development (Nigeria)

Civil Liberties Committee (Malawi)

National Women’s Lobby Group (Zambia)

Country Women’s Association of Nigeria (COWAN)

Women and Democracy in Uganda

Women in Nigeria (WIN)

Sudan Women’s Voice for Peace
Association for Progressive Women (APW Malawi)

Action for Development (ACFODE Box 16729, Kampala, Uganda)

African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD-Khartoum)

Horn of African Centre for Democracy and Development. (HACDAD)

The Botswana Centre for Human Rights. Box 00416, Gaborone

Women and Development Council (Cameroon)

Information needed for the construction and discussion of the Gender in Governance Index (GIGI) can be obtained from institutions at three levels: 1) country specific institutions ——- government offices of statistics, national or social research institutes, university departments of demography or social statistics, technical advisors of relevant ministries (e.g. education, health, economic development, women’s affairs) 2) regional institutes _______ CODESRIA, African Women’s Organisation for Research on Development, Federation of African Women Educators, Women and Law in Southern Africa, Sourther African Research Documentation Centre, Women’s Research and Documentation Project, International Association for the Advancement of Women, and 3) the United Nations agencies (e.g. UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIFEM, UNIDO, UNESCO), Africa Fund (NYC-USA), International Labour Organisation (Geneva, Addis Abada), The World Bank (Washington, D.C.), The Population Council (NYC-USA), PACT (Washington, D.C.), University of Bradford (UK), International Parliamentary Union (Geneva) International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

14.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has laid out both the theoretical and methodological framework for producing a report on Gender and Governance in Africa. The report will provide a state-of-the-art situational analysis on the performance of African countries regarding one of the 12 critical areas outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action: women in power and decision-making. Further, the report will detail obstacles and resistance faced by women and organisations attempting to close the gender gap in governance. Such obstacles exposed at various levels including the very construction of concepts, policies and laws aimed at solving problems, the implementation of policies, the allocation of resources and the evaluation of projects and programmes.

14.0.1 The conceptual issues outlined in this chapter focus attention on three concerns: 1) the need to keep in mind at all times African historical experiences and the interaction between precolonial, colonial and importance of expanding political concepts originally constructed by men, to include women and gender relations. Both theoretically and in a practical sense, a gender lens alters the view of decision-making arenas. These arenas were discussed in terms of the domestic sphere, the economic sector and political office, and 3) the significance of a politics of transformation. As women are included in decision-making at all levels, there is the expectation of significant change in the organisation of society, resources available to the disadvantaged, and women’s confidence in their own contributions. Based on these conceptual
concerns, four methodological approaches were outlined, including the interpretive intersectional, critical and historical. All data collected for the report must address these methodological issues at the very least.

14.0.2 The above framework was used to outline work that needs to be done in four key areas in order to obtain a comprehensive report on the status of African women in governance. It was suggested that the body of the report should include four chapters with each chapter covering the present situation, problems and policy or other measures for transformations. Each chapter is expected to pay close attention to and be guided by the conceptual and methodological framework. The four chapters are: gender and governance within the family, gender in politics and political office, gender and senior management and the construction of a composite index, the Gender in Governance Index (GIGI). This index will comprise of a number of indicies that will allow comparison between African countries on the State of women’s empowerment.

14.0.3 It is envisaged that the report will be definitive in stock-taking as regards the problem of women in decision-making and power. By all indications, the world has not moved very far since Beijing, and Africa exhibits the same problem. There is a need to review the present situation and assess whether or not governments, organisations and programmes have gone beyond the level of rhetoric. In addition, ongoing obstacles and the measures required to overcome them must be suggested. Through a comparative analysis, nations and institutions can learn from each other. Africa must begin to work as a regional block as it moves forward.

Appendix

Recommendations for Medium and Long-term Research

Research is a continuous process which covers short, medium and long-term goals. As this chapter suggests in the short run information needs to be gathered on what policies, laws, constitutional reforms, machinery etc, exist in each nation. However, these demand critical analysis of content to uncover aspects inimical to women. What action has been taken regarding these provisions? Evaluating implementation means reviewing process. The study of process takes us beyond content analysis to assessing resistance, bottlenecks, problems. One major issue is poor resource allocation. Another is the way indigenous practices are integrated into new programmes. Medium and long term research goals call for studies into ways that gender-relations are changing within local communities and institutions. Resources are needed for projects that aim to alter women’s marginalised positions. These include leadership training programmes, science/technology projects and studies of grassroots attempts to empower women. In the face of AIDS, Zulu women have reactivated the old tradition of virginity tests in rural South Africa. Is this a programme that empowers young girls? What programmes exist to alter male behaviour and how is the role men play being assessed (reproduction, HIV/AIDS, household decision-making, etc.)? This type of research will be enhanced by comparative data, as well as by participatory studies in which those being researched participate in deciding priority problems, in collecting, and evaluating the data. This will also ensure that research takes into account interpretations of people in different social positions.

Studies on gender relations can not be over emphasised since women are in power relations
with men as well as with other women. What are men doing individually and collectively to empower women? Even among academics, a cursory look at work on democracy and governance by African men shows that they pay minimum attention is to gender. Our male counterparts write about politics as if women do not exist. The citizen is still male. Scholars can begin to take gender seriously at this level. Theory building among scholars is an important resource that needs to be tapped and research presently runs the risk of ghettorising the study of women and governance. Unfortunately, progress toward full participation is not guaranteed. Women have lost the right to vote or run for office in the past (Egypt, Algeria). They can also lose representation, as occurred in the recent elections in Zimbabwe. The number of female representatives elected to parliament in that country fell from 21 to 12 in the 2000 elections.