



## FROM DATA TO POLICY ACTION: TACKLING GENDER-BASED DISCRIMINATION IN SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

### VIRTUAL POLICY DIALOGUES

#### BACKGROUND

Gender equality is achieved when both men and women enjoy the same socio-economic rights and opportunities and have equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes. Despite progress in recent years, women in Southern Africa still face gender-based discrimination across all spheres of life. Such discrimination not only negatively affects women's rights and empowerment opportunities but also undermines countries' potential for economic growth and sustainable development.

The OECD Development Centre's Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) sheds light on the formal and informal laws, social norms and practices which constitute structural barriers that women and girls face throughout their lifetime, while the Africa Gender Index (AGI) jointly produced by the African Development Bank Group (The Bank) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) offers a comprehensive picture of gender equality in Africa today. The AGI reveals progress is being made in closing gender gaps, in areas ranging from education and health to jobs, wages, participation in politics and leadership roles. Furthermore, it features marked differences between regions suggesting a nexus between gender equality, stability and economic prosperity.

In order to move this conversation forward, from data to policy action, the [OECD Development Centre](#), the [African Development Bank Group](#) and the [United Nations Economic Commission for Africa](#) are co-organising a series of policy dialogues in collaboration with the Austrian Development Agency, on addressing some of the key indicators, particularly the social institutions and ecosystems governing women and men's behaviour to enhance gender equality. The policy dialogues will bring together a range of stakeholders including policy makers, international and regional organisations, as well as grassroots organisations, private sector, civil society and research organisations, representatives from financial development institutions, think tanks, gender experts, advocates and foundations.

The outcomes of the dialogue in Southern Africa, together with prior policy dialogues in West Africa and those forthcoming in East Africa, will feed into these institutions' forthcoming reports, namely the [SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa](#) and the [AGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa](#) with concrete policy recommendations and actions to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment.

#### OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the Southern Africa policy dialogue will be to:

- **Present insights into the current status of gender equality and women's empowerment in the region** and share policy recommendations to effectively integrate gender in policy, project and programme planning, implementation and monitoring for policymakers and practitioners across the region;
- **Identify key challenges as well opportunities**, including through the exchange of good practices on addressing gender-based discrimination and promoting women's and girls' rights;





# SOUTHERN AFRICA

- Identify a set of context-specific policy options to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in Southern Africa.

## FORMAT

The policy dialogue will be organised in **three separate stages**:

	DATE & TIME	REGISTRATION
A <b>grassroots workshop</b> on gender equality with grassroots, civil society and research organisations, think tanks, gender experts and advocates, as well as foundations	26 May 2021 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM (GTM +2)	Registration closed
A <b>policy workshop</b> with policy makers, as well as international and regional organisations	2 June 2021 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM (GTM +2)	Registration closed
A plenary virtual <b>policy dialogue</b> with all stakeholders	15 September 2021 2:00 – 4:30 PM (GMT+2)	Registration open <a href="#">here</a>

The workshops will include:

- A presentation of results and findings specific to Southern Africa from the [SIGI 2019](#) and [AGI](#);
- Thematic breakout sessions focusing on three themes:
  - Women's health deprivation, gender-based violence and restricted reproductive autonomy
  - Women's economic empowerment and access to productive and financial resources and markets;
  - Women's political voice, leadership and agency;
- Discussions on policy options to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.
- For each workshop, participants will seek to i) identify the key challenges constraining the achievement of these goals and ii) identify the policy options that could address these challenges.

The plenary policy dialogue will:

- Bring all stakeholders together in a spirit of mutual learning and exchange;
- Take stock of the key outcomes from the workshops, especially the proposed policy options;
- Provide a space for dialogue among stakeholders to agree on policy recommendations and key messages for the forthcoming SIGI Regional Report for Africa.

## FURTHER READING

- African Development Bank, UNECA (2020), *Africa Gender Index Report 2019 - Analytical report. What the 2019 Africa Gender Index tells us about gender equality, and how can it be achieved.*, <https://www.afdb.org/en/documents/africa-gender-index-report-2019-analytical-report>.
- OECD (2019), *SIGI 2019 Global Report: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities, Social Institutions and Gender Index*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

The dialogue will continue on social media using the hashtags: #SIGIAfrica and #SIGI. Tag us: [@OECD\\_Centre](#), [@Wikigender](#), [@AfDB\\_Group](#) and [@ECA\\_OFFICIAL](#).



## ABOUT US

**About the OECD Development Centre:** The OECD Development Centre was established in 1962 as an independent platform for knowledge sharing and policy dialogue between OECD member countries and developing economies, allowing these countries to interact on an equal footing. Today, 26 OECD countries and 29 developing and emerging economies are members of the Centre. The Centre draws attention to emerging and systemic issues likely to have an impact on our global development and more specifically the challenges faced by today's developing and emerging economies. It uses evidence-based analysis and strategic partnerships to help countries formulate innovative policy solutions to the global challenges of development. The OECD Development Centre's gender programme aims to identify the root causes of gender inequality and to feed policy dialogue by producing data and evidence-based analysis, in line with the 2030 Agenda. It focuses on discriminatory social institutions, i.e. formal and informal laws, social norms and practices, which adversely affect women's and girls' lives and consequently curtail their empowerment opportunities.

**About the African Development Bank:** The African Development Bank is the premier multilateral development finance institution fostering economic growth and social progress in Africa. The Bank's primary goal is to reduce poverty and improve the living standards of all Africans by mobilizing resources in and outside Africa. The Bank is dedicated to tackling the full complexities and challenges of development on the continent by providing financial and technical assistance to development projects and programs in regional member countries. It has integrated operations of lending directly to the public and private sectors through a variety of financing instruments as well as providing advisory services. The Bank, through its High 5s Agenda (Light-Up and Power Africa, Feed Africa, Industrialize Africa, Integrate Africa, and Improve the Quality of Life for the people of Africa), intends to accelerate the continent's economic and social transformation. Reducing gender gaps and accelerating women's empowerment are part of the core objectives of the Bank's Ten Year Strategy (2013-2022) and its High 5s agenda to ensure sustainable and inclusive development in its regional member countries. As the leading development institution on the continent, the Bank is championing the production of sex-disaggregated data to adequately address the gender gaps and develop responses that leave no one behind.

**About the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa:** Established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations (UN) in 1958 as one of the UN's five regional commissions, ECA's mandate is to promote the economic and social development of its member States, foster intra-regional integration, and promote international cooperation for Africa's development. Made up of 54 member States, and playing a dual role as a regional arm of the UN and as a key component of the African institutional landscape, ECA is well positioned to make unique contributions to address the Continent's development challenges. ECA's strength derives from its role as the only UN agency mandated to operate at the regional and sub-regional levels to harness resources and bring them to bear on Africa's priorities. The contribution by ECA to the task of carrying forward the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 is centred on the Commission's three core functions, namely, its convening function, its function as a think tank and its operational function. ECA's is to deliver ideas and actions for an empowered and transformed Africa; informed by the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.

