

Monitoring the Implementation of Women's Human-Rights Instruments

The case of the Africa Gender Monitor



Introduction

This paper illustrates how Oxfam GB Southern Africa supports the efforts of women's-rights organisations to monitor the domestication and implementation of women's human-rights instruments such as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Africa Women's Protocol) in Africa, using the example of the Africa Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Monitor (known as the Africa Gender Monitor or AGM).

Oxfam GB works with others to overcome poverty and suffering and firmly believes that overcoming gender equality is critical to this endeavour.

In Africa, Oxfam GB has supported a rights-based approach and promoted the popularisation and ratification of home-grown women's-rights instruments such as the Africa Women's Protocol. Oxfam GB Southern Africa recognises monitoring as the key aspect of operationalising women's human-rights instruments, hence support for AGM. Holding African governments accountable for the implementation of women's human-rights instruments is one way to assist grassroots women to claim their rights.

African governments have undertaken commitments in this area. These include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, the Africa Women's Protocol, constitutional provisions, and supportive legislation as well as national gender policies. However, these have not been matched with dramatic improvement in the lives of ordinary women.

Reporting processes on the implementation of women's-rights instruments and commitments exist but they are far from adequate. Reporting by national governments is often inconsistent and weak, with no sanctions for late, poor, or non-reporting. Governments may choose to include or exclude civil society. Neither National Reports, Shadow Reports from NGOs, nor concluding comments of bodies like CEDAW or the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, receive much publicity. The absence of effective gender-disaggregated mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation have helped let governments off the hook with regard to their obligations.

AGM is an independent civil-society organisation based in South Africa that seeks to help fill the gap in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of instruments on women's rights on the continent.

The Africa Gender Monitor (AGM)

The establishment of AGM in 2006 can best be described as a point of departure with regard to women's-rights monitoring initiatives. This initiative emerges from within the women's movement to contribute towards reinforcing the current women's-rights monitoring initiatives. In order to develop a conceptual framework to inform the monitoring process, AGM has undertaken a series of formal and informal consultations with various players in the fields of women's rights, broader human rights, development, and democracy. All this has helped AGM to create its own niche.

The founder members are gender activists from diverse backgrounds and occupations, ideological positions, and charisma who are driven by their passion for the promotion of women's rights. They pulled together to contribute to the full realisation of women's emancipation and eradication of all forms of discrimination, oppression, and abuse. The pulling together of AGM's founders can best be characterised as an illustration of the growing sense of urgency for concrete steps to improve the lives of women on the continent. It has been noted that currently, accountability and processes to address women's rights, particularly commitments by states to women, have stagnated and are failing to address the fundamental issues and demands of women in Africa today.

Context, challenges, and opportunities: situating the Africa Gender Monitor

It has often been said that women 'do not eat paper', and clearly the situation of women on the ground does not correspond with what we see on paper. Evidence points to the fact that 'theoretical gender equality' is not translating into substantive and tangible equality and women's empowerment.¹ Figures reflect worsening poverty levels, disease, and insecurity. Women in Africa are bearing the brunt of the effects of under-development and poverty. Women dominate the highest prevalence rate position as regards HIV, compounded by their socio-economic, cultural burdens. Evidence from recent base-line research conducted by AGM also reveals high maternal mortality rates amongst African women, and high levels of poverty as well as increasing violence against women. Conflict situations in Africa have increased impunity and violations of women's rights, including sexual violence.

Clearly there is a contradiction with regards to gender equality and women's rights. There is an urgent need for women's-rights activists, organisations, and institutions such as AGM to consolidate gains made, address new challenges, and contribute towards achieving genuine change. A complex set of strategic choices and actions are necessary, based on a concrete understanding of the reality. Central to this effort is the need to uplift the voices, experiences, and hopes of African women themselves and reflect an accurate picture that will permit development of appropriate tools to halt and reverse these negative trends.

Overall objectives of AGM

- 1 To monitor the domestication and implementation of international women's human-rights instruments;
- 2 To monitor the ratification, domestication, and implementation of the Africa Women's Protocol and the Africa Union Solemn Declaration on gender equality;
- 3 To research and document good practices on the implementation of instruments on gender equality;

- 4 To support and partner with existing national and regional civil-society organisations and networks on promotion of gender equality and women's rights to fulfil their mandate;
- 5 To support African Union gender machinery addressing issues such as gender, family, youth, and people with disabilities; the Pan-African Parliament and the Africa Union Gender Directorate fulfil their mandate by supporting through research, training, and capacity building.

Strategies for monitoring women's-rights instruments are outlined below.

Guarding the guardians: the study

AGM conducted research on how selected African governments are faring with regard to the implementation of commitments in the areas of women's rights in various thematic areas.

The purpose of the research was to provide baseline information that will be used as basis for holding governments accountable for the commitments they have made through international and regional instruments on women's human rights.

To guide the research processes, a reference group was formed that advised on the terms of reference, commented on draft reports, and proposed the process leading to the regional consultative conference on the implementation of women's human-rights instruments methodology. This was composed of key leading women activists and key gender machineries in Africa, including: Keryn Stefiszyn from the Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria, South Africa; Mary Wadia from ActionAid International; Matrine Buku Chulu from Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA); Susan Nkomo, then working with the Office on the Status of Women, the Presidency in South Africa, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa; Loice Bwambale from the Africa Gender Monitor; Hon. Saida.Agrebi from the Tunisian Women's Association; the Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS); and Oxfam staff members Rose Gaway, Ayanda Mvimbi, and Lingalireni Mihowa.

The study examined the situation of women in Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe with a focus on these thematic areas: legal and policy framework, governance and representation including the role of women in conflict management and resolution, sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence, trade and poverty alleviation, and girl-child education. It also looks at national processes for the operationalisation of women's rights, key stakeholders, and awareness about women's-rights instruments as well as best practices.

The report 'Guarding the Guardians: Case Studies on the Implementation of Gender Equality and Women's Rights Instruments and Recommendations for the African Gender Monitor' contains:

- baseline studies on Kenya, Mali, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe;
- proposed instruments and thematic areas as a niche for AGM;

- proposed strategies for engagement with influential players;
- an adapted African Gender and Development Index (AGDI), as a monitoring and evaluation framework.

Tremendous strides have been made in the area of education, particularly in gender parity. In many countries universal primary education is closing the enrolment gap at the primary level and a greater emphasis on keeping girls in school has improved prospects for girls at the secondary level. Throughout the continent, the legal and policy framework for the promotion and protection of women's rights is improving.

Countries have established or strengthened machinery for improving the status of women. There are more women in Parliament and in other sectors of public life than at any time in history. Significantly high percentages of growth have been attained, even though they have not always transformed the lives of ordinary citizens.

However, a number of challenges threaten the capacity of women to access their rights. These include:

- the HIV pandemic
- environmental degradation
- hostile socio-political and economic policy environments
- weakening of the women's movement in Africa
- lack of political will
- the persistent strength of custom, culture, and tradition/religion *vis-à-vis* written law
- limited human and financial resources
- legal illiteracy
- the failure of gender mainstreaming to integrate women's concerns in all policies, plans, and programmes and the loss of funding for stand-alone interventions for women's rights
- little progress reducing child and maternal mortality rates
- unsatisfactory progress in promoting access to safe water and sanitation
- high levels of violence against women including trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery
- the rise of religious and other forms of fundamentalism
- the pervasive militarisation of life in the aftermath of 9/11.

On the other hand, the information revolution has eased communication and has given women more access to information than ever before in the history of womankind. The Internet, the cell (mobile) phone, and text messages have radically increased the capacity of women to network and participate in far-off alliances. Notwithstanding its unfairness, liberalisation has without doubt

created spaces in the market from which women entrepreneurs have benefited. Even the gruesome scourge of HIV and AIDS has had the unlikely positive side-effect of making it easier for women to relate to rights issues and has fuelled their drive for financial independence.²

The performance of countries in this contradictory environment has been uneven across sectors. Although Uganda has performed very well with regard to numbers of women in high places, the increase did not result in more adoptions by Parliament of pro-women's rights legislation like the Domestic Relations Bill. Nigeria has comparatively few women in high places and yet has fared comparatively well in amending legislation in areas like FGM. Rwanda performed best in the world with regard to numbers of women in Parliament but fell short in its reporting obligations under CEDAW. South Africa did all the right things in establishing a legal and policy framework, but bridging the gap between the *de jure* and *de facto* situation remains an uphill task. Zimbabwe is one of the few countries where women are legally protected against marital rape. However, women in Zimbabwe still have to contend with culture and patriarchy.

In terms of integrating Islam and women's rights and reforming legislation, Tunisia has gone against the grain of stereotypical predominantly Muslim countries. With regard to education, it is the boys in Tunisia who may in future need affirmative action! However, Tunisia remains unwilling to remove reservations to CEDAW. Kenya has lagged behind with regard to reforming legislation and numbers in Parliament, but this has been counter-balanced by relatively higher numbers of women in the judiciary, which has made use of progressive international instruments such as CEDAW, and an exemplary performance in girl-child education. The high rate of maternal mortality and performance in girl-child education in Nigeria underscores the fact that culture can be a stronger determinant of women's fate than financial resources.

The experience of women in Mali, which has signed up to all the important women's-rights instruments (albeit with reservations on CEDAW), and where domestication of international instruments is automatic upon signature, confirms that a formidable legal framework is far from enough to effect fundamental changes in women's lives. There is need for more in-depth study of the causes of the differences in these areas, especially in countries with similar national characteristics that have fared differently.

Consultation with key stakeholders in Africa

AGM conducted a joint continent-wide workshop with Oxfam GB Southern Africa as part of the process for assessing governments' accountability on women's human rights. This was attended by a range of national, regional, and international stakeholders from civil-society organisations, academia, and bilateral agencies such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the Economic Commission of West African States (ECOWAS) Gender Unit.

Not 'business as usual': rejuvenating women's-rights monitoring

The AGM strategy on monitoring government commitments to the implementation of women's human-rights instruments articulates the key instruments for monitoring, the thematic areas, strategic aims and objectives, strategies for engagement, and the action plan. The action plan can be obtained on request from AGM.

Key gender instruments for AGM

AGM will focus its monitoring programmes in selected African Union countries based on the demand in collaboration with other players.

- CEDAW – countries have signed, but many have not ratified, the Optional Protocol; others have ratified both, but are at varied levels of implementation; a few countries are yet to sign CEDAW such as Sudan and Somalia. AGM notes that little progress has been made in fully implementing the Convention.
- Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women – up until the end of 2007, 23 countries have signed and ratified, 23 have signed and not ratified, and seven have not signed nor ratified.
- SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and Addendum on Violence against women – as a region SADC has made marked progress in its ratification and implementation of the SADC Protocol.
- Beijing Platform for Action – while most governments have national plans of action, very few of these have been implemented, so there is still room for monitoring effective implementation in this aspect.
- International Covenants of Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – these covenants are under-utilised in women's- rights discourse, yet they provide opportunities for the advancement of gender equality.
- The Millennium Development Goals
- NEPAD and its Peer Review mechanism (APRM)

Thematic areas

To realise its objectives, AGM's programme will be composed of the following key thematic areas for implementation over the next five years (2008–2012) in selected African Union countries, taking into account other players engaged in similar activities.

AGM will focus on six priority thematic areas:

- gender-based violence
- equality and discrimination
- property rights

- governance and representation
- sexual and reproductive health rights
- girls' education

Strategic aims and objectives

Strategic Aim 1: Promotion of sexual and reproductive health rights

To monitor governments' commitment to promote women's reproductive health, report on progress made, legislative reform, funds disbursements, access and visible statistical change, and progress made in improving the quality of life of women at country level.

Specific objectives:

- Ensure that women participate in planning and implementation of sex and reproductive health and gender and HIV and AIDS activities.
- Monitor financing of gender machineries with a specific emphasis on funds allocation to line ministries, addressing critical needs of women such as sexual and reproductive health, education, and social welfare.
- Mapping and documenting the manner in which resources are allocated in national budgets.
- Monitor maternal mortality rates.
- Monitor access to primary health care among women.
- Advocate and sensitise on the importance of gender equality in political and decision-making processes within government.
- Raise awareness of gender issues and seek to enhance the capacity of the gender focal persons and achieve change at sector level.
- Monitor and sensitise local governments on gender mainstreaming in good governance, accountability, transparency, and promotion of women's human rights.
- Monitor policy change and how it affects women's power to decide on issues such as sex and reproductive rights.
- Lobby traditional and religious leaders to engage actively in promotion of the status of women.
- Promote innovative campaigns to promote the status of women using strategies like letter missions, SMS (text-messaging) campaigns, and contacting prominent women personalities, as well as men, as ambassadors to speak out on women's rights.

Strategic aim 2: build alliances and expand the range of actors

Build links with like-minded individuals, organisations, and governments to ensure the implementation of all the key instruments on women's rights.

Specific objectives:

- Broaden the stakeholders' base and consolidate the activities aimed at protecting and advancing women's rights.
- Focus on key government apparatus such as judges, magistrates, legal practitioners, and heads of local courts, public prosecutors, police, and other law-enforcement agents to ensure adequate interpretation of the law in a manner that upholds the rights of women and incorporates the principle of gender equality from various women's-rights instruments.
- Implement region-specific strategies to ensure that member states implement the Beijing Platform for Action on participation of women in decision-making by 2013.

Strategic aim 3: undertake research on the status of women in Africa

Research and document good practices on the implementation of instruments on gender equality.

Specific objectives:

- Undertake or commission independent research to generate empirical gender-disaggregated data as a basis for continued pressure for gender equality and promotion of women's rights.
- Mainstream gender in government programmes while sensitising governments to increase funding for gender activities.
- Network and collaborate with reputable research or academic institutions and centres of excellence to strengthen gender-based research and documentation for AGM and its national partners.
- Monitor and advocate for the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and Millennium Development Goal on girl-child education in four pilot SADC and East African Countries by 2009.

Strategies for engagement

- 1 *Training* on monitoring, research, and data collection for capacity-building of AGM and its partners. Capacity-building in report writing and drafting of shadow reports of AGM and its partners and stakeholders. Learn from previous relevant exercises carried out in the last 15 plus years.
- 2 *Gender budgeting*: A national budget reflects the government's commitments. It is therefore an invaluable monitoring tool and entry point for gender monitoring. AGM will enhance mechanisms for monitoring financing of gender machineries as well as the general allocation of resources to line ministries, and for monitoring how ministries cater for the needs of women such as sexual and reproductive health, primary health, social welfare, governance, and education. This process will involve mapping and documenting how resources are allocated in national budgets and subsequently how this impacts on the quality of life for women.
- 3 *Broaden the base of pro-gender partners and stakeholders*: There is need to build a critical mass to help strengthen and complement government efforts to protect and advance women's rights. In the last ten years,

intergovernmental organisations such the United Nations, international aid organizations and NGOs, and more recently the private sector have also expressed their concerns regarding gender issues, and have expressed their support. This therefore calls for a strategy that brings governments with expressed political commitment, international and national non-government partners, and the private sector together to engage in a collaborative manner to contribute to efforts aimed at improving the status of women. This is critical in Africa particularly, given levels of poverty, deprivation, disease, and under-development which affects women especially. Gender efforts should go beyond just sensitising and raising awareness at government level. Laws need to be reviewed to protect women, increase access to basic social amenities, and continue to enhance the rights of women and their livelihoods. Donor agencies and international NGOs should continue to upscale their commitment to build the capacity and strengthen national, sub- regional, and regional women's movements in order for them to effectively monitor the implementation of gender equality and women's rights. AGM contributes to building capacity of women's organisations to effectively monitor governments.

- 4 ***Research, mapping, and documentation of gender reports and data:*** There is an abundant amount of independent empirical gender data to back up arguments in favour of gender equality and women's rights, but this information is not co-ordinated and collected in a systematic way. One gets the sense that each effort is 'reinventing the wheel' instead of consolidating and building on lessons learnt. AGM will register and map out existing reports and studies pertinent to the gender effort, building up a database of information. AGM will also develop country-specific gender profiles that will be a mirror of the status of women in each country and offer a basis to guide efforts to strengthen specific efforts. AGM will compile and register findings from country reports, donors, and partner organisations reflecting commitments and investments made, and the outcome in improving the status of women. The lack of empirical data undermines the effectiveness of initiatives, and leads to duplication of efforts and a sense of failure in our effort to improve the status of women. Development planners, economists, and decision makers can use this information as a reference in their daily tasks. This will strengthen our capacity to use evidence-based data for our decision-making processes.
- 5 ***Collaboration with reputable academic and research institutions:*** Build and strengthen links with and between universities and other academic institutions within Africa and abroad. Promote collaborative interaction between policy makers such as parliamentarians and senior government with NGOs and academic institutions, while building strategic relations. Strengthening the links between academic institutions and governments' decision-making processes contributes to informed decision-making and accurate documentation of socio-political processes, and brings governments closer to civil efforts that complement development in the country. AGM will link up with reputable research or academic institutions and centres of excellence throughout Africa. AGM's strategic relationships with both academic institutions and policy makers will help strengthen the relations

between individual governments, civil-society organisations, and academic institutions.

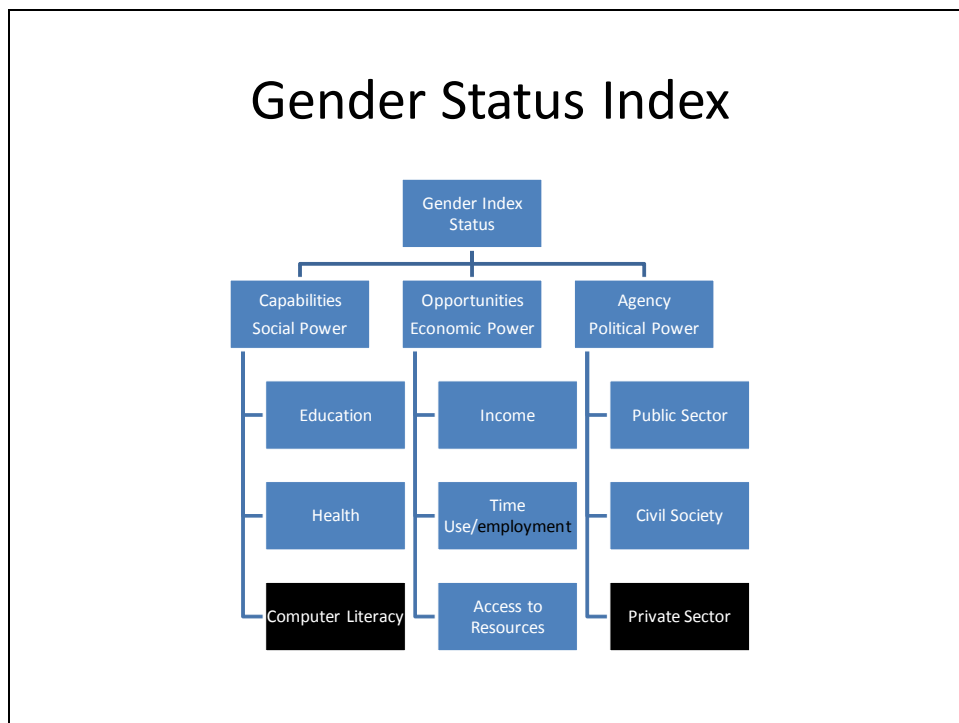
- 6 **Advocacy and awareness raising:** This is critical in changing the mindset of decision-makers and policy makers. AGM will upscale advocacy aimed at changing the mindset of key policy makers to influence them to keep gender issues at the centre of all decision-making processes throughout planning, implementing, and reporting processes. A raised awareness among senior government officials also influences greater political will to act and allocate resources that will ensure change and impact at grassroots level. To this end, AGM will contribute towards linking women’s rights to all aspects of development. AGM will add value by raising awareness of gender issues and seeking to ensure that decision and policy makers uphold women’s rights and improve the status of women in general.

Monitoring and evaluation framework

AGM uses the Africa Gender and Development Index (AGDI) as a tool for monitoring states’ compliance with women’s-rights instruments. AGDI is grounded in the realities of African states’ capacities; it captures gender issues that are measurable.

The AGDI is comprised of the Gender Status Index which captures gender issues that are measurable quantitatively and the African Women’s Progress Scoreboard, a qualitative measure of government policy performance in women’s advancement and empowerment.

Figure 1: Gender Status Index (GSI)



Components of the Gender Status Index

Figure 1 outlines the components of the GSI.³ It is proposed that computer literacy be added because it is the measure of future literacy. Under computer literacy the indicator proposed is ability to use computers and radio in ICT programming.

On opportunities, the focus should be placed on time-use as a way to take forward data collection, crucial to measuring the unremunerated labour of women, and providing insights into their quality of life.

Turning to the component of political power, the private sector, which is a key platform of power especially in this age of liberalisation, is added. AGM should retain the AGDI system of calculation with a slight adjustment in the time series.

The African Women's Progress Score Board (AWPS)

The AWPS looks at four areas: women's rights and social, economic, and political power. The vertical axis outlines these items that are to be measured. The horizontal axis spells how they will be measured. The units used are ratification, reporting, law, policy commitment, development of a plan, targets, institutional mechanism, budget, human resources, research, involvement of civil society, dissemination of information, and monitoring and evaluation.

Using this tool AGM will be able to make meaningful country assessments and make a worthwhile contribution to the collection of gender-disaggregated data on the continent. Many of the indicators proposed in the GSI are not readily available and must be collected. This will help stimulate and democratise the collection of gender-disaggregated data. It will also be a useful resource for the gender units of the AU NEPAD, AU Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and women's-rights advocates across the continent. Special credit goes to the ECA for this tool.

The monitoring framework will be the scoreboard for progress on commitments to African women; it is a qualitative measure of government policy performance in women's advancement and empowerment.

Proposed mechanism for monitoring the implementation of women's human rights

AGM will request observer status with the African Court on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), Southern Africa Development Committee (SADC), Commission on the Status of Women/Division for the Advancement of Women (CSW/DAW), and the CEDAW Committee. This will facilitate AGM feeding into these bodies with accurate and updated information on the situation of women and the compliance of member states with key women's-rights instruments. AGM will operate at regional level through RECs.

AGM has partners in all five geographic regions; south, east, central, west, and north Africa. AGM will work with the RECs such as SADC, ECOWAS, and East African Community, and also partner with national NGOs to monitor the implementation of women's rights and the advancement of gender equity in each

sub-region; with a particular focus on what government is doing to achieve gender equality at national level. Best-practice models for these sub-regional monitoring initiatives will be documented and shared with partner organisations sub-regional partners such as SARDC/WIDSAA so that good practices are shared and replicated where appropriate.

In monitoring and implementation, AGM will promote RECs' collaboration with key stakeholders such as WLSA, WILDAF, SARDC/WIDSAA, and SOAWR to monitor the implementation of CEDAW, the Africa Women's Protocol, and National Action Plans in line with the Beijing Platform for Action and Dakar Platforms for Action. AGM will also collaborate with national partner NGOs or other institutions in support of national initiatives to promote gender equality. AGM's board of directors will explore inroads into key decision-making processes. It will also establish and work with champions or goodwill ambassadors to upscale women's-rights issues. AGM is developing a database of contacts from partner governments, NGOs, Parliaments, business, and academia.

AGM will contribute towards developing tools to:

- raise awareness, monitor, and report on the policies, programmes, and implementation (or lack thereof) of commitments and legislative frameworks towards the achievement of gender equality by governments;
- interview and observe selected government institutions to establish common institutional practices and trends in the promotion and protection of gender equality (similar institutions, service beneficiaries, and other stakeholders in each of the countries will be engaged at consultative workshops to establish more information);
- conduct structural analysis of government and its key department on service delivery and poverty alleviation, which will give a reflection on the level of women's participation in decision-making in relation to men (this is an important element in the overall effort to strengthen and promote women's human rights, especially in rural areas where women constitute the majority of poor people, with needs and challenges that are specific to them). In carrying out this activity, AGM will embark on a multi-faceted project for a period of three years, beginning in April 2008.

The proposed pilot project will focus on an analysis of local government structures and processes in the implementation of women's sexual and reproductive rights. AGM will promote gender-sensitisation of local government officials and the creation of an enabling environment for community participation in the implementation of women's human-rights instruments.

This pilot project will require gender-disaggregated data that will be used to inform decision-makers and stakeholders and guide the development and implementation of activities to address challenges observed. Workshops will also be convened to sensitise local government leaders, community leadership, and women's interest groups on gender issues and required considerations in planning processes and service delivery. A report of the gender analysis of local government structures and processes in the country under review will be

produced, with recommendations for implementation by local women's organisations.

Regional and sub-regional developments

AGM's strategy-development process recognises some key developments that have shaped the women's-rights agenda in Africa. Profound changes are taking place on the continent that have implications for women's livelihood, participation, self-development, and self-esteem. At the continental level, AGM recognises achievements such as:

- The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights created in 1998.
- The position of Special Reporter on the Rights of Women in Africa, whose mandate, among others, is to collaborate with actors promoting human rights, and to undertake missions in countries to promote the agenda of the Commission and women's rights in general, as well as investigate the situation of women.
- NGOs have been taking advantage of their Observer Status with the African Commission, to engage with the Special Rapporteur and to influence the recommendations of the Rapporteur.
- The African Court on Human and People's Rights was established with the purpose of enforcing African Union states' compliance with the provisions of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and importantly, to ensure effective recourse for survivors of human-rights violations (it must be noted, however, that of the 11 judges appointed in 2006, only two are women).
- The role that the Economic Social and Cultural Council, as well as the Observer Status within the Africa Union can play in placing the voices of ordinary citizens closer to the seat of power where significant change can take place.
- The recent appointments of African women as Deputy Executive Secretary of the United Nations and UN Special Envoy on AIDS in Africa are opportunities for change and potential for women on the continent.
- The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa Centre for Gender and Development co-ordinated the adoption of the Dakar Platform for Action preceding the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and also managed the Africa review of Beijing Plus 10 in 2004. It has played a key role in facilitating women's empowerment organisations in Africa to review and assess progress made in realising the rights of women.
- The AGDI assesses the extent to which African governments are meeting their commitments at policy and legal levels to qualitatively change the lives of women.
- The SADC secretariat, with the support of the women's movement in the sub-region, is pushing towards accelerating the adoption of a SADC Protocol on

Gender and Development. This effort is aimed at contributing to changing the status of the current 1997 SADC Gender and Development Declaration.

- Sub-regional parliamentary organisations, such as the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF), have mainstreamed gender and women's empowerment into their structure, programmes, and practice. SADC PF is playing an increasingly influential role in the political economic processes in Southern Africa, opening more opportunities for engagement with civil society at sub-regional and national levels.
- The unfavourable global economic climate does not guarantee the attainment of the MDG commitments made at the G8 Summits, nor economic blueprints made in previous and similar events.

Notes

¹ For a fuller discussion see T. Mugadza and R. Mukasa (2007).

² Interview with Dr. Tamale.

³ For details on the indicators and scoring system see AGDI.

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