Abstract

The author outlines the overarching mechanisms, laws and policies that have developed throughout the African Continent. Included are strategies for the attainment of gender equality within the African context and an evaluation of constraints and challenges experienced while building viable and sustainable gender structures. Particular attention to the Southern African Development Community provides an in depth view of the gender mechanisms through institutions, organizations, laws and policies.

1. Introduction

The development and evolution of structures for the attainment of gender equality are a new phenomenon in Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa. Historically, women's issues were subsumed under political patronage through the Women's Leagues/Wings of political parties and liberation movements, Presidential Offices or Office of the First Lady, and political advisers on gender and associations. In terms of government functions, they were mainly the responsibility of the Welfare and Social Development ministries or departments.

The backdrop of efforts toward gender equality in the Continent, were the political conditions that allowed space for women to meet and chart the way forward. Many of the wars that ravaged the Continent had been brought to an end, the dictatorships (including one-party and military states) were being resolved through processes of democratic elections, and most of all, the last bastion of colonialism, South Africa, had fallen. These political conditions opened up the space for women of the Continent to meet and discuss the overdue subject of gender equality and made it possible and easier to reach agreements.

All African countries have, to date, put in place national structures, starting from the highest levels of government, and extended to the wider society, to empower women and advance their status.[1] The institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women (also called National Gender Machineries), chosen by the different African countries vary in form and effectiveness. Most of these are created by governments and include participation by both civil society and the private sector. Government structures that

deal with gender or women's issues such as: ministries of gender or women's affairs; and/or national women's bureaus or commissions of women in development; gender focal points in all ministries relevant to the advancement of women - including education, planning, health and environment; legal/regulatory frameworks within constitutions, laws, budgetary and auditing systems, which are part and parcel of institutional mechanisms in the public arena; and international instruments, conventions, declarations and other agreements which by implication constitute institutional (regulatory) frameworks for dealing with gender issues.[2]

2. Broad African gender institutional structures

Policy environment

The African Union (AU), followed on the dedication made by its predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity that committed itself to the African Platform of Action, through the Declaration of African Heads of States in 1995. The African Union was inaugurated in Durban in July 2002 and committed itself to the principle of gender equality in Article 4(1) of its Constitutive Act. Within the AU, there is absolute gender parity in the appointment of Commissioners, senior, professional and technical appointments.[3] The AU issued the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa at the Third Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments, held in Ethiopia in 2004. This followed closely on the African Union's adoption of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the rights of Women in Africa, which was approved at its summit in Mozambique in 2003. The protocol was only able to come into effect after being ratified by fifteen countries. On November 25, 2005, the

protocol came into force and as of May 2007, twenty-one African states have ratified the protocol, twenty-three have signed but not ratified, and seven have not signed.[4] It is still early to determine what effect it will have, but the implementation of the protocol places an obligation on governments to establish institutional mechanisms to ensure protection of women from practices and attitudes that allow continuation of discrimination, including differential opportunities in access to justice.[5]

Institutional arrangements.

The AU Directorate of Gender is responsible for assisting both the AU and its Member States with gender mainstreaming.

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) has a mandate to promote social and economic development in the Africa Continent. It has established two structures focusing on women and gender, the Committee on Women in Development (CWD) and the African Centre for Women (ACW). The CWD is a committee made of representatives of ECA Member States, civil society and experts. Its role is to,

- Assist and advise ECA on the integration of women in development.

- Mobilise resources for the integration of women in development.

- Follow up and evaluate sub-regional activities for the integration of women in development.

The ACW was established to service the ECA internally, across the Continent, regarding gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. The ACW aims to:

- Assist Member States, as well as divisions in the ECA, to mainstream gender in programmes, policies, projects and laws;

- Undertake advocacy, networking, training and coordination in order to facilitate the advancement of women in Africa.

In 2001, the African Centre for Women changed its name and became the *African Centre for Gender and Development*. In 2003, it produced the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI), which was applied to Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Madagascar, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda. The utility of the AGDI is that it:

- Provides African policy-makers and partners with appropriate tools to measure gender equality and equity, women's empowerment and advancement.

- Helps monitor progress made in implementing ratified conventions.

- Democratises statistics and quantitative monitoring tools that are easy to use and effective.

- Stimulates inter-departmental cooperation within the ministries.

The AGDI has two components:
1. The Gender Status Index: applies quantitatively measurable issues related to gender equality. It is based on three blocks, including; social power capabilities, economic power opportunities, and political power agency.

2. The African Women's Progress Scoreboard: measures government policy performance regarding women's advancement and empowerment. It focuses on qualitative issues to fill the gap between quantitative indicators and country specific or sector specific indicators, or those related to decision-making and well-being at the household/individual level. It is made up of four blocks, namely, women's rights, social power capabilities, economic power opportunities and political agency.

The African Development Bank is an institution mandated to assist in the development of African countries and has committed to addressing concerns raised by the Beijing and the Africa Platforms of Action.

3. Pan-African Civil Society institutions and organizations

The organizations and institutions selected for this part of the paper are all from sub-Saharan Africa.

Gender and the Economic Reform in Africa[6] is a pan-African research and advocacy programme, established in 1996, in order to influence policies and decision-making processes so as to contribute to gender equality and economic justice.

Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF)[7] encourages women to obtain decision-making positions; and states and civil society have responded to WiLDAF by the provision of policy statements, and expanded legal instruments, etc.

African Women's Development and Communications Network (FEMNET)[8] was established in 1988 for the purpose of sharing information, experiences, ideas and strategies among African women's NGOs. Their programmes include:

- Projects for the implementation of CEDAW.

- Monitoring the implementation of the Dakar and Beijing Platform of Action.

- Disseminating information and building the capacity of African women to participate in the process and structures of the African Union.

- Lobbying and advocating for gender mainstreaming in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Documents and national Macro-economic Policies.

- Men to men: Men against GBV Network, whose main objective is to mobilise male supporters for the long-term campaign to eliminate gender-based violence in Africa.

The African Gender Institute[9] and *Gender and Women Studies for Transformation*[10] has been working in academic institutions to strengthen studies for the production of knowledge and theory on the Continent.

African Progressive Communications and Flamme are examples of organizations that have been working in the area of Information Communication Technology (ICTs), to assist individual women and women's organizations to work effectively with new technologies. One of the growing areas in the use of ICT is with the numerous initiatives that have started to conduct debates and discussions on gender issues online. This has somewhat transcended the vast distances of the Continent and made communication easier.

The presence of these pan-African organizations focusing on one or the other aspects of gender equality has been critical for the structures meant to advance gender equality. They have produced volumes of research report on various gender subjects and issues facing Africa and Africans. They have played a lobbying role in relation to governments, while at the same time supported positive initiatives. Indeed, most of the advances made in the field of gender equality on the Continent have mainly been initiated through collaborative actions by governments and civil society organizations.

4. African sub-regional structures

The East African Community sub-regional structure

The East African Community is made up of three countries, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. In 1972 this Community collapsed following political differences between the Member States. The countries that constitute the Community are regarded, in Africa, as very strong on gender issues and have set many examples for countries in the SADC sub-region. The problems that have beset the region and the Community have slowed down possibilities of the establishment of a common gender equality structure. The individual countries have, however, developed their own structures and civil society organizations in both Kenya and Uganda. They have done this through producing women's manifestos to ensure that women's issues are taken into account of by their governments. In addition, a Gender Budget Network was also established among civil society groups in these three countries.

The Economic Community of West African States sub-regional structures

The West African sub-region is organized under the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose purpose is to promote co-operation and integration in economic, social and cultural activity. Ultimately, ECOWAS hopes for the establishment of an economic and monetary union through the total integration of the national economies of Member States: Benin,

Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. ECOWAS has developed a gender policy in order to involve more women in development. The twenty-sixth session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government held in Dakar in 2003, created a structure responsible for gender equality, in the form of a "Gender Unit" at the Executive Secretariat in Abuja and a "Centre for Gender Development" in Dakar, to replace the General Secretariat of the West African Women Association "WAWA".

The main role of the Centre for Gender Development is to establish, develop, facilitate, coordinate and follow up the strategies and programmes aimed at ensuring that matters related to the disparities between men and women are in the integration programmes of the Community. They are also responsible for the promotion of women, and are incorporated within the framework of objectives of the ECOWAS Treaty. Its mission is to:

- Implement the ECOWAS policy and system of gender management.

- Strive for the increase in the performance of women in their fields of activities such as seminars, round tables, and study trips in order to stimulate the spirit of entrepreneurship and enjoy better exchange of experience.

- Ensure the apprenticeship and development of skills needed to execute the Millennium Goals on sex equality in the sub-region and in programmes.

- Build networks and partnerships with relevant Agencies and Institutions for financial, technical and statutory support to the activities of the Centre.

The ECOWAS Center for Gender and Development works closely with the following partners: departments handling women programmes in the Member States; civil society (NGOs, Associations and women organizations in West Africa and elsewhere); ECOWAS' specialized agencies; international institutions and organizations; development agencies; and the private sector.

The Southern African Development Community regional structures and mechanisms

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is made up of the following Member States, Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, South Africa and Tanzania.

Policy environment

SADC's work with gender issues began in 1990 when its Council of Ministers resolved to give priority to issues of gender and development. In 1996, a SADC Conference on Social Development held in Mbabane, Swaziland, recommended to the Council of Ministers that the SADC Secretariat should coordinate gender issues at the SADC Sub-Regional level. This recommendation was approved by the Council of Ministers during its meeting held in Maseru, Lesotho in August 1996.[11] SADC Heads of State and Governments signed the Declaration on Gender and Development on 8th September 1997, in Blantyre, Malawi. Article H of the Declaration commits Heads of State and their respective countries to a programme aimed at achieving gender equality in the SADC sub-region.

In September 1998, Heads of State and Governments signed the *"Addendum on*

the Prevention and Eradication of Violence against Women and Children", in Grand Baie, Mauritius. They resolved to adopt measures, which will contribute to the prevention and eradication of violence towards women and children. They undertook measures to make interventions in legal, social, economic, cultural and political areas, adopted integrated approaches to combat violence against women and children, made budgetary allocations to combat violence against women and children as well as adopt policies, programmes and mechanisms to enhance the security and empowerment of women and children.

As part of the SADC restructuring, a team comprised of experts from various fields, including gender, was formed to facilitate the development of the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP). The objective of RISDP, among others, was to provide strategic direction on the key priority issues that SADC should address in the next fifteen years. Gender is identified as one of the critical crosscutting issues to achieve poverty reduction; improvement in the quality of the standard of living for the majority of the citizens in the region; prevention and eradication of HIV & AIDS, and regional integration.

In August 1999, the SADC Council of Ministers approved a Plan of Action for gender in SADC. The Plan aimed to bring about gender equality by using the approach on mainstreaming gender into SADC Policies, Programme of Action and Community Building Initiative; as well as through the approach on empowerment of women in the region.

A SADC Gender Policy Framework was created by Article 21(3) of the SADC Treaty, and the Protocol on Gender and Development concerns were provided for in Article 22 of the Treaty. The purpose of the policy is to provide guidelines for the institutionalization and operationalization of gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, and capacity building, as key development strategies for gender equality and equity within SADC.[12]

Institutional arrangements

The SADC Institutional Framework for Advancing Gender Issues includes: a Standing Committee of Ministers; an Advisory Committee of NGOs and government officials; a Management Committee consisting of three member countries and one serving as a secretariat; gender focal points in all coordinating units and regional commissions; and a Gender Unit in the Secretariat.[13]

The SADC Gender Unit (SADC-GU) was established by the Ministries responsible for Gender and Women's Affairs in the Member States. The overall objectives and mandate of the SADC Gender Unit is to facilitate, coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the objectives of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, the Addendum on the Prevention and Eradication of Violence Against Women and Children, as well as regional and global gender instruments which SADC Member States are a party to. The Gender Unit is also mandated to raise awareness, and build capacity of staff members at the Secretariat, to articulate gender issues in its policies, programmes, projects and activities. Furthermore, the Unit is required to monitor progress made by the Secretariat and Member States in addressing gender and women's concerns.[14]

SADC-GU programmes

One of the biggest achievements of the SADC-GU programme is that the SADC region has had the highest increase in women

in decision-making than any part of the world.[15] This is a result of concerted effort to ensure 30% representation of women in decision-making in all structures by 2005. Although not all the Member States have complied, this is one area where there has been heightened awareness and marked progress. It has also spearheaded the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action among the SADC Member States. Its intervention areas in 2005/6 are: the development of a regional gender policy framework and harmonisation of gender policies; gender mainstreaming of SADC structures and institutions; development and implementation, at the regional level, of women's empowerment in various sectoral areas; communication, information sharing, coalition-building and networking; training and capacity-building of national machineries personnel, national and regional trainer, decision-makers and other critical stakeholders on concepts, analysis, sensitisation and empowerment skills; monitoring and evaluation of the Beijing Platform of Action, SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its addendum, CEDAW, and the African Charter on Women.

The SADC-GU has also worked internally with the SADC Directorates and other SADC structures. Their programme for gender mainstreaming started with the training of personnel in 2003. Supported by monitoring and evaluation, especially of the implementation of the Beijing Platform of Action, this training programme has conducted a continuous review of policies and protocols for its gender sensitivity.

National gender machineries in the SADC Member States

One of the interventions of the SADC-GU has been the process of strengthening gender institutional mechanisms in the sub-region.

This process began in 2002 and came about as an instruction from Ministers of Women and Gender from the Member States.

A profile of the Member States with regards to the structures and mandates of the national gender machineries is attached at the end of this paper. In scanning the mandates of the machineries, it is clear that they cannot make much impact in changing the institutions of government and other institutions of society, because most of them are not clearly defined and those that are, seem too weak to achieve the objectives of gender equality. For the gender machineries to be effective, it is important for them to have mandates supported by legislation defining their powers and roles.[16]

SADC regional Civil Society institutions and organisations

Most of the SADC Member States have a proliferation of civil society organizations focusing on the attainment of gender equality. The role played by the SADC-based regional organizations in achieving gender equality has been critical in the achievements of the region.

Women in Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) focuses on advocacy work which culminated in the adoption of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa; they lobbied for Swaziland's adoption of CEDAW until it was ratified; helped gender-sensitive legal reforms in Botswana, Zimbabwe, Malawi and Mozambique; and support cases about the abduction of young girls in Swaziland and Zambia.

Gender Links[17] works in partnership with the Media Institute for Southern Africa and conducted the first Gender and Media Baseline Study for the SADC region.

Today they campaign on gender violence, disseminate a bi-monthly journal, and have piloted gender mainstreaming within three media training institutes.

Gender and Media Southern Africa[18] is an umbrella organisation of individuals and institutions that work to promote gender equality in and through the media. Its programmes include research and monitoring of news, advertising and entertainment from a gender perspective they conduct audits on how gender is integrated into policies and laws that govern media in the region; provide training and capacity building on how to integrate gender into media education; and develop advocacy through campaigns promoting equal rights.

5. Strategies for the attainment of gender equality

Research
Many institutions and organizations in Africa, and its sub-regions, have used research as a basis for lobbying and advocating for women's empowerment and gender equality. The fact that in most African countries it is now commonplace to find disaggregated gender data is the achievement of gender specialists and researchers. The changes in policy and legislation to take into account the rights-of-women are another area where research has contributed greatly to the course of gender equality.

Women's manifestos and charters
Some countries have the method of compiling the needs and demands from women in the form of a manifesto or charter. Examples of countries that have developed Women's Manifestos are: Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Namibia, Zambia and Botswana. This has been an effective lobbying tool that has brought about some results. For example, the South African Charter for Effective Equality, which details women's demands for the SA government, was adopted by the first South African democratic government as a document that they would consult to guide them on the needs of women in SA.

Lobbying and advocacy
This is the most popular strategy that has been used by women's and gender organizations throughout the Continent to gain ground for gender equality in all the important structures and institutions in Africa. This strategy has also been effectively used by women in state structures. The position taken by the African Union, for gender parity in all decision-making positions, came about because of the strong lobby of African women for a 50/50 representation. As a result of lobbying by African women, politicians, and NGOs, 50% of the new Commissioners for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), are women[19]

The SADC decision to have a 30% female representation in political decision-making positions also came about as a result of the strong lobby of women politicians from the SADC sub-region and women from civil society. The lobby drafted and presented the Draft Declaration on Gender and Development to the heads of states with such determination that the heads of state decided to sign the document, which in future would guide SADC in its gender equality work.[20]

Alliance-building and partnerships
The use of donor partners has been an effective strategy employed with much effect, especially in the countries that are donor

dependent. The danger has been for the governments to see the issue of gender equality as a donor-driven agenda, and therefore comply most minimally. However, it has brought about some changes, the biggest being the creation of heightened awareness of gender issues.

In the recent years, there is a growing alliance-building between gender activists, who have mostly been women, and men seeking a constructive engagement with issues of gender equality. A network for men in constructive engagement in Africa is hosted by FEMNET, and different countries have their own organizations and networks. An initiative to establish a SADC network was started in 2004 but it does not seem to have taken off effectively. The areas of focus for the men's groups and organizations have mainly been in the reduction of gender-based violence, violence against women, and the reduction of the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Mainstreaming gender concerns in Poverty Reduction Strategy Programmes

Several countries in Africa, especially in the SADC sub-region, have had to adopt a poverty reduction strategy in order to qualify for donor funding and relief from debt from international agencies. At the time of the development of the strategies, gender issues were not taken into consideration. It was after the release of the programme that activists and advocates for gender equality began to do a gender analysis of their poverty reduction programmes and realised that these would impact negatively on the women, who are already in the majority of the poorest individuals. The problem with integrating gender concerns *after* the adoption of a programme by the government is that the gender concerns become an afterthought

and are treated as unimportant.

Gender budgeting

The initiatives of the gender analysis of government budgets, popularly known as Gender Budgeting, as a strategy to lobby for the allocation for resources for work towards gender equality, have increased in Africa; these initiatives are mainly supported by the United Nations Development Fund for Women, UNIFEM. Previously, the organizations that worked on gender budgeting concentrated on analysis of the budget only *after* it was presented by the government. The new move is to work with government officials to ensure that gender considerations are inserted *before* the budget is released.

The East African network of organizations working in the area of gender budgeting, leads the other African sub-regions in innovative and consistent initiatives. Ugandan and Tanzanian organizations have managed to work directly with their Ministries of Finance to enable the officials to acquire skills for gender budgeting.

6. Achievements

One of the biggest achievements of the gender struggle in Africa has been the proliferation of different structures and mechanisms for the advancement of gender equality. This has challenged both gender activists and states to find best ways to bring gender issues into the running of governments.

The fact that gender issues are raised in most major conferences and meetings as well as in the establishment of important institutions and structures at Continental, sub-regional and country levels, is the achievement of both structures and individuals involved in

Resources

The question of very limited human and material resources allocated to the gender structures, is problematic of all countries in Africa. Most gender structures are thinly staffed and under-resourced financially yet the impact of their work is expected to extend to most institutions in government and civil society. Although it is clear that resources in every country are limited, this under-resourcing of the gender structures is mostly due their low-priority status.

Status and authority

Most structures geared towards the attainment of gender equality have been subjected to low status and therefore do not command the sort of authority they require in order to transform institutions of the state and society. The low status is a result of a combination of the above and other challenges facing these structures. The lack of authority and status become stumbling blocks when the machineries are confronted with resistance to change. Therefore, they remain unable to effectively temper institutional cultures that perpetuate inequalities.

Balancing the expectations with what is possible.

The gender structures in Africa, find themselves having to balance the great expectations of the women in their countries. Most of the women working in these structures are employed as civil servants, with civil service job requirements, but are expected to perform the additional task of being "women leaders".

The other big expectation is that the presence of these structures will have an immediate positive impact on the lives of ordinary women. The understanding is that there would be a positive impact on the quality of lives of women, especially with regards to poverty alleviation.

Although this is one of the ultimate desired impacts, the responsibility for this impact lies squarely with the state or government itself, not with the gender structure.

Absence of a women's movement

The absence of effective women's movements is one of the biggest challenges facing the gender structures in Africa. This deficiency has meant that the push for the substantive transformation of gender relations and institutions is weak. Coalitions and networks have done sterling work but a Women's Movement (in the classical sense of social movements) would make the push stronger.

Donor agendas

Most of the gender work done both by governments and civil society organizations is funded by donors, and in most cases external international donors. This action tends to make the governments stand back and abdicate their obligations to see gender work as their responsibility. On other hand some governments have accused gender activists of pursuing foreign interests and agendas. In yet other cases, some countries, especially those that are donor-dependent, have been "coerced" into complying due to their reliance on donor funding to sustain their economies. In such cases, the internal support for gender equality becomes weak.

8. Conclusion

The Fourth World Conference on Women, which produced the Beijing Platform of Action, has been critical in galvanising countries in the African Continent towards concerted efforts of trying to achieve gender equality. The Africa Regional Conference, held in Senegal in 2004, produced the African Platform of Action

and a position on what needs to happen for the attainment of gender equality in the Continent, a position that almost all countries could rally around and support. The Beijing and African Platforms have been accepted as guiding documents for gender equality in Africa. Civil society organizations have played a very important role in ensuring that governments adhere to the commitments that are contained in the two Platforms. They have done this through research, lobbying, training and other numerous ways and methods. The shift towards democratic governments has also created conditions to argue for gender justice. Although the mechanisms created to attain gender equality seem beset by many challenges, they have made some important gains that can only be built upon.

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20. Details of the lobbying activity are found on Page 14 and 15 of the Genderlinks publication quoted above.

Structures and Mandates of the Gender Machineries in the SADC Member States

Country	Gender Machinery	Mandate	Gender Policy and Action Plans
ANGOLA	Ministry of Family Affairs and Women's Promotion. The structure of the Ministry is decentralized to the provincial level. There are gender focal points appointed to co-ordinate gender/women's issues in all the Ministries. The Ministry collaborates very closely with NGOs, which work with gender/women's issues under the co-ordination of the women's umbrella, Rede Mulher.	Co-ordination of gender and women's issues; Capacity building for gender competencies; Advocacy and lobbying.	The Director of Research in the Ministry and NGOs proposed way forward towards the National Gender Policy, which is in the process of being developed. The National Constitution has enshrined equality clauses. Angola is a signatory to a number of international and regional gender equality and equity instruments. It has signed the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development and its Addendum on the Prevention of Violence against Women and Children.
BOTSWANA	Department of Women's Affairs. The Women's Affairs Department links with other departments through a system of Gender Focal Persons (GFPs) that exists in all line Ministries. Other mechanisms for the promotion of women include the Botswana National Council on Women (BNCW) that was formed in 1999. A Gender Project Planning Committee (GPPC) has also been formed in the University of Botswana.	Promotion of gender sensitive policies; provision of technical advice on gender planning and budgeting; gender advocacy and dissemination of information coordinating and facilitating capacity building efforts. The Council (BNCW) functions as the highest advisory body to government on policy matters relating to gender and development issues, and reports to the Minister Responsible for Women's Affairs.	Signatory to International and Regional instruments. National Gender Policy on Women in Development, and with five-year plan. National Gender Programme Framework formulated in 1998. The government has also developed a short-term strategy for gender advocacy and social mobilisation.
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)	In 2003, the DRC created the Ministry of Women's Condition and the Family A Commission has been established and acts as the gender focal point within the transitional Parliament. The Commission collaborates with the Ministry Responsible for Women's Affairs and civil society organizations working for the empowerment of women. The government also formed the National Programme for the Empowerment of Congolese Women (PNPFC) and the National Council for Women.	Responsible for coordinating and managing all issues relating to promotion and integration of gender; central role in the formulation of the national gender policy; facilitation and the provision of technical support; monitoring and evaluation of the diverse activities related to gender and development. The Commission is responsible for reforming legislation that discriminates against women and the integration of gender during the formulation of law. The Council is a consultative organ on the empowerment of women chaired by the Minister Responsible for Women's Affairs. Its membership includes experts from Provincial Councils, public and private institutions, NGOs, women's and religious organizations and Commissioners.	

Country	Gender Machinery	Mandate	Gender Policy and Action Plans
LESOTHO	In 1998, the Ministry Responsible for Gender/Women's Affairs was established. A system of Gender Focal Points (GFP) was established within all Government departments, the University and NGOs. A Gender Management Forum functions at central and district levels. The Basotho Women's Parliamentary Caucus (BWPC) has brought together women from different political parties. The government harmonises the plans and programmes of government with those of CSOs, allocating resources to CSOs, monitors and evaluate their programmes	The specific roles of GFP are to propose appropriate and effective gender mechanisms; and to provide support and direction for gender mainstreaming in all aspects of planning and programming in their respective organizations. BWPC sensitises policy-makers and traditional leadership on current and emerging gender issues.	National Gender and Development Policy, based on the Beijing Platform of Action, CEDAW and SADC and Commonwealth Declarations
MALAWI	Ministry of Gender and Community Services. Gender Focal Points (GFPs) are identified by the Ministry in all stakeholder organizations. The Gender Policy Implementation Committee was formed by networks representing six critical areas of concern. At the local level, the District Assembly, consisting of the Area and Village Development Committees, is responsible for ensuring that gender is mainstreamed within District programmes.	The Ministry is mandated to spearhead the production, coordination, collaboration, implementation and monitoring of the National Gender Policy; and provides backstopping services on gender analysis and mainstreaming to all its stakeholders. The District Assembly is responsible for ensuring that gender is mainstreamed within District programmes.	After the Beijing Conference, Malawi developed a National Platform for Action (MNPFA) to operationalize the Beijing Platform for Action The government developed a National Gender Policy in 1998 To facilitate the implementation of the Gender Policy, the Ministry responsible for women's affairs has developed a National Gender Programme.
MAURITIUS	Ministry of Women's Rights, Child Development and Family Welfare. Within the Ministry, a Women's Unit serves as a focal point for women's issues A system of Gender Focal Points has been established in all ministries to mainstream gender into policies, programmes and projects. To promote the development and advancement of women, a National Women's Council was set up by an Act of Parliament in 1985.	The Women's Unit implements policy and projects in collaboration with other government institutions, NGOs and bilateral and multilateral organizations. The GFPs are responsible for making available related documents, reports studies, policies and disaggregated statistical data; informing of existing gender biases or policies and strategies that need to be developed; assisting in the implementation of gender policies and programmes in their respective organizations; and monitoring the key decisions related to gender.	Among the key challenges for the government of Mauritius is the formulation of a National Gender Policy (NGP). In 2000, Mauritius released the National Gender Action Plan (NGAP).

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MOZAMBIQUE	The Ministry for the Coordination of Women and Social Action (MMCAS) was formed in 2000. Coordinating mechanisms have been set up by the government and parliament. In 2001, MMCAS's National Directorate of Women was formed, The National Council for the Advancement of Women, an inter-sectoral co-ordination organ consisting of government and civil society representatives to supervise, direct and follow up the implementation of policies and approved gender programmes.	The Ministry executes and coordinates policies towards women's emancipation, development and social welfare. The MMCAS's National Directorate defines and promotes the implementation of support programs for the development of women and family. The National Council for the Advancement of Women directs and follows up the implementation of policies and approved gender programmes. It also advises government and develops proposals to guide the management of public issues related to gender and women.	The execution of the national strategy to advance women and gender equity is the responsibility of the Government of Mozambique. A National Plan for the Advancement of Women was drafted in 2002. In 2003, a Draft National Gender Policy and Strategy was produced.
NAMIBIA	Ministry of Women Affairs and Child Welfare (MWACW). A Minister and Deputy Minister, who are political appointees, head the Ministry and they are also members of the Cabinet as well as members of Parliament.	The MWACW's purpose is to mainstream gender programmes, advocate for law reforms and coordinate gender activities at the national and international levels. It is mandated to develop, promote, facilitate, coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate the process of legal, political and socio-economic development of women, men and children equitably in all spheres and to ensure gender equality.	National Gender Policy adopted in 1997 In addition, the National Gender Plan of Action was developed to support the policy's implementation. The National Gender Plan of Action, which was approved by Cabinet in 1998, is a Programme of Action aimed at speeding up the implementation process of the National Gender Policy.
SWAZILAND	Coordination Gender Unit in the Ministry of Home Affairs GFPs in Ministries and Departments The government also created the Swaziland Committee on Gender and Women's Affairs (SCOGWA) consisting of representatives from government, NGOs and the private sector.	The main objective of the Unit is to facilitate the mainstreaming of gender into all areas of national development. It also coordinates national, regional and international gender activities and works with partner NGOs and UN Agencies to implement sectoral activities and mainstream gender. The SCOGWA is responsible for developing a gender programme.	Draft National Gender Policy In tandem with the National Gender Policy, the government will formulate a Gender Action Plan and Strategy.

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SOUTH AFRICA	Office of the Status of Women (OSW) Joint Monitoring Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women (JMC) Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) Civil Society Organizations	The OSW is an administrative body that monitors the accountability of the government's gender commitments; formulates national gender policy; ensures consistency between government policy and gender policy; implements policy; arranges gender trainings for governmental departments. The JMC's main tasks are to monitor and evaluate the status of women; facilitate public views into legislative processes; act as an accountability mechanism within parliament to ensure a gender focus in legislation; and to assess the government's compliancy with national commitments. The CGE is an independent, non-governmental, commission.	The "Draft National Women's Empowerment Policy" was initiated and drafted in 1995 by the gender office; however, this was never finalized nor put into action. The OSW developed the "National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment", in 2000, to achieve gender equality throughout SA. The aim was to create a framework to guide the development of laws, policies, procedures and practices to ensure equal rights in government structures. This Policy intends to put in place mechanisms that are pervasive reaching from the governmental to the provincial levels. The overarching principles of the Policy are that they can be applied by all sectors to their policies, programs, and practices.
TANZANIA	The Ministry of Community Development, Gender and Children The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar created the Ministry of Youth, Employment, Women and Children Development (MYEWCD) to coordinate women's affairs in Zanzibar. Gender Focal Points (GFP) has been institutionalised in all central ministries, government departments and in the local government structures. Parliament has established a Parliamentary Standing Committees on Community Development. Parliamentarians have formed a caucus - Tanzania Women Parliamentarians Group (TWPG). Umbrella NGOs play a big role in advocacy, networking and complementing the government's initiatives geared towards women advancement and gender equality.	MYEWCD coordinates women's affairs in Zanzibar. The GFPs coordinate and monitor, as well as ensuring that all sectoral policies and programmes are gender sensitive.	National Action Plan on Women's Empowerment and Gender Advancement (under review) The government also reviewed its Women in Development Policy of 1992. This review led to the development of the National Gender Policy The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar formulated and adopted a policy on Protection and Development of Women (2001), which provides a framework for promoting gender equality in Zanzibar.

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ZAMBIA	The Gender In Development Division (GIDD) located in the Cabinet Office. A Committee on Good Governance, Legal Affairs and Gender has been established in Parliament. In line with the National Gender Policy, the government established a Gender Consultative Forum At the sectoral level, gender focal points (GFPs) have been designated in all government ministries, Provincial Administration and other public sector institutions. At District level, the District Planning Officers have been appointed as Gender Focal Points. GIDD has been working in close collaboration with NGOs and CSOs	The main responsibilities of GIDD are: to facilitate the integration of regional and international instruments on gender into national laws, policies and programmes; to coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the National Gender Policy; to facilitate institutional capacity building; to coordinate the mainstreaming of gender into macro and sectoral policies and programmes: and to disseminate information in order to increase gender awareness. GIDD's specific Terms of Reference include advising the government on emerging gender issues. Also, to ensure that policies are gender sensitive; and to provide advice on any other gender issues.	National Gender Policy was adopted in 2000 The government embarked on a consultative process of formulating a National Gender Policy Plan of implementation in 2001. Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 1996-2000
ZIMBABWE	The Gender Department, in the Ministry of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation Gender Focal Points (GFPs) District Gender Councils Provincial Gender Councils.	The National Gender Machinery responsible for the promotion of gender issues. The key task of the GFPs is to facilitate the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the National Gender Policy (NGP) and mainstreaming gender in their respective organizations. The responsibilities of Councils include: coordination of activities of government and departments, NGOs and other organizations; facilitating local level discussions; identifying local practices and customs that hinder gender equality; developing local sanctions against perpetrators of GBV; initiating women's empowerment projects; and monitoring the National Gender Policy.	National Gender Policy adopted in 2001 A National Plan of Action is being developed.