Mainstreaming gender in Africa's Policymaking to deliver agenda 2030

Intégrer l'égalité des sexes dans l'élaboration des politiques africaines en vue de la mise en œuvre de l'agenda 2030

Akiça Bahri

National Agricultural Institute of Tunisia (INAT)

Abstract: Despite significant advancement in human development and economic growth and more particularly regarding inequality reduction in Africa, there is still a long way to go for attaining gender equality. This paper covers different aspects of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment on the African continent. It provides facts and figures about inequalities in Africa between men and women, which are among the greatest in the world with African women and girls among the world's poorest, and with the highest rates of illiteracy, as well the regional disparities. It recognises the centrality of gender equality (SDG-5) to the achievement of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), and more particularly the linkages of SDG-5 with SDG-2 (Zero Hunger), SDG-4 (Quality Education) and SDG-6 (Clean water and sanitation). The gender gap costs sub-Saharan Africa on average US$ 95 billion a year because women have lower participation in the paid labour force. In sub-Saharan Africa, women bear 71% of the water collection burden and produce 90% of all food. African women constitute around 70% of the agricultural labour force in many African countries. They dominate subsistence rainfed agriculture, which puts them more at risk of a changing and variable climate. Existing national policies and regulations exclude women from benefiting equally from water and land resources, and access to finance and credit and other vital inputs. This results in women's productivity lower than men's. Access to education is still a challenge in Africa, with 24% of the girls out of school compared to 18% for boys. 12 million girls (as compared to 7 million boys) in sub-Saharan Africa are never expected to attend school. Important regional disparities between females and males regarding the average number of years of schooling, the wages, or the political representation are underscored. Progress achieved so far in women's empowerment in Tunisia is presented. Gender equality needs to be adequately mainstreamed in sustainable development policy and practice, and a number of challenges should be overcome at different levels (political, economic and social) and in different fields (education, health, political participation and economic empowerment). Moreover, policy measures are required to reduce the gender gaps in access to economic and productive assets, the workplace, and participation in governance and decision-making.

Résumé : En dépit des progrès importants réalisés en matière de développement humain et de croissance économique, et plus particulièrement en ce qui concerne la réduction des inégalités en Afrique, il reste encore beaucoup à faire pour atteindre l'égalité des sexes. Cet article couvre différents aspects de l'intégration de la dimension genre et de l'autonomisation des femmes sur le continent africain. Il fournit des faits

et des chiffres sur les inégalités entre hommes et femmes en Afrique, qui figurent parmi les plus grandes au monde, les femmes et les filles africaines étant parmi les plus pauvres du monde et présentant les taux d'analphabétisme les plus élevés, ainsi que les plus grandes disparités régionales. Le rôle central de l'égalité des sexes (ODD-5) dans la réalisation des 17 objectifs de développement durable (ODD) est souligné et plus particulièrement les liens entre l'ODD-5 avec l'ODD-2 (Faim « zéro »), l'ODD-4 (Éducation de qualité) et l'ODD-6 (Eau propre et assainissement).

L'écart entre les sexes coûte en moyenne à l'Afrique subsaharienne 95 milliards de dollars par an, car les femmes participent moins à la population active rémunérée. En Afrique subsaharienne, les femmes supportent 71% du fardeau de la collecte de l'eau et produisent 90% de tous les aliments. Les femmes africaines constituent environ 70% de la main-d'œuvre agricole dans de nombreux pays africains. Elles sont présentes majoritairement dans l'agriculture pluviale de subsistance, ce qui les expose davantage à un climat changeant et variable. Les politiques et réglementations nationales existantes empêchent les femmes de bénéficier de manière égale des ressources en eau et en terres, ainsi que de l'accès au financement, au crédit et à d'autres intrants essentiels. La productivité des femmes est donc inférieure à celle des hommes. L'accès à l'éducation reste un défi en Afrique, avec 24% des filles non scolarisées par rapport aux garçons. 12 millions de filles (contre 7 millions de garçons) en Afrique subsaharienne ne seraient jamais scolarisées. Les disparités régionales importantes entre les femmes et les hommes en ce qui concerne le nombre moyen d'années de scolarité, les salaires ou la représentation politique sont soulignées. Les progrès réalisés jusqu'à présent dans l'autonomisation des femmes en Tunisie sont présentés.

L'égalité des sexes doit être correctement intégrée dans les politiques et les pratiques de développement durable. Un certain nombre de défis doivent être surmontés à différents niveaux (politique, économique et social) et dans différents domaines (éducation, santé, participation politique et autonomisation économique). En outre, des mesures doivent être prises pour réduire les disparités entre les sexes dans l'accès aux biens économiques et de production, au travail et à la participation à la gouvernance et à la prise de décisions.

1 Introduction

Gender equality is an enabler of growth and a critical accelerator of sustainable development that can significantly contribute to Africa's economic transformation. As stated by Lakshmi Puri (2016a) "*I am referring to gender equality and not gender equity... This is not a matter of semantics, but a political statement on the urgency of ensuring equal rights and equal opportunities for all (women and men everywhere and in all spheres of life) as a precondition for us as a society to fully achieve progress in development, peace, security and human rights.*"

Promising to 'leave no one behind', the 2030 Agenda heightens the profile of gender equality as a key component of sustainable development. It positions the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment as a precondition and necessary outcome of sustainable development (Puri, 2016b) and recognises that the achievement of gender equality is central to reaching the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) over the next 15 years and beyond. Gender equality (SDG-5 – Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) is indeed critical for poverty reduction (SDG-1), for promoting sustainable agriculture, achieving food security and improved nutrition (SDG-2), ensuring healthy lives (SDG-3) and quality education (SDG-4), ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (SDG-6), promoting economic growth (SDG-8), combatting climate change and its impacts and strengthening resilience to disasters (SDG-13), managing sustainably natural marine and terrestrial resources and ecosystems (SDG-14 and 15), and promoting peaceful and inclusive communities (SDG-16).

In fact, gender is still not adequately mainstreamed in sustainable development policy and practice. There is no 100% fair and gender equality in the whole world yet, all the

more so in Africa. Despite significant advancement in human development and economic growth and more particularly regarding inequality reduction in Africa, there is still a long way to go for attaining gender equality. A number of challenges should be overcome at different levels (political, economic and social) and in different fields (education, health, political participation and economic empowerment). Moreover, policy measures are required to reduce the gender gaps in access to economic and productive assets, the workplace, and participation in governance and decision-making.

This paper covers different aspects of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment on the African continent. Facts and figures about inequalities in Africa between men and women and the linkages of SDG-5 with SDG-2 (Zero Hunger), SDG-4 (Quality Education) and SDG-6 (Clean water and sanitation) are presented as well the regional disparities. A case study illustrates the progress achieved so far in women's empowerment in Tunisia. The conclusion attempts to present the change required for gender mainstreaming on the continent.

2 Gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment

Gender mainstreaming is the strategy for the promotion of gender equality. It is part of a holistic approach to achieve women's rights, women's empowerment and gender equality. According to the UN General Assembly (1997), "*Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality*".

However, women's empowerment goes beyond gender equality. It is the process by which women gain the power and ability to make strategic life choices and control their own destiny (Kabeer, 1999). Empowerment takes place when "*individuals and organised groups are able to imagine their world differently and to realise that vision by changing the relations of power that have kept them in poverty, restricted their voice and deprived them of their autonomy*" (Eyben, 2011). There are different dimensions of women's empowerment – political, social, economic and psychological – which can be defined as follows (Kabeer, 1999; Luttrell, *et al.*, 2009; Eyben, 2011):

- ***Political empowerment:*** *when women gain the ability to influence the rules and norms that govern society and decisions about who gets what, when and how – individually or collectively.*
- ***Social empowerment:*** *when women gain the ability to make/influence decisions about their social interactions, reproduction, health and education.*
- ***Economic empowerment:*** *when women gain the ability to make, influence and act on decisions about their participation in labour markets, their share of unpaid work and the allocation and use of their own/their household's assets.*

- ***Psychological empowerment:*** *when women gain the belief that they should be able to make or influence decisions that affect them and gain the confidence to act on this.*"

A study carried out in Addis Ababa found that each of these dimensions is important on its own except the psychological dimension, which was found to be more strongly correlated with all other dimensions (Bayissa *et al.*, 2017). The authors concluded that empowering women psychologically with confidence, information and motivation might be quite effective for achieving progress in all other dimensions of empowerment.

3 Africa's Transformative Agenda 2063, UN Agenda 2030 and the AfDB's High 5s

The Africa's Agenda 2063 adopted in January 2015 by the African Heads of State and the Governments of the African Union laying down a 50-year vision for Africa (AUC, 2015), the 2030 UN Agenda (UN, 2015) and the African Development Bank's (AfDB) Ten Year Strategy implemented through its five priority areas (AfDB, 2016) share a common agenda as well as most of the goals and targets with their focus on the people with particular attention to women, youth, and children (UNDP, 2017). The three agendas converge in considering gender equality as a development goal that is central to the structural transformation of the African economy towards an equitable, inclusive and sustainable development on the continent (Table 1). To reduce gender inequalities, the AfDB, in its 2013-2022 Strategy, focuses on promoting women's economic empowerment, strengthening women's legal and property rights and enhancing knowledge management and capacity building.

Table 1 – Convergence between Africa's Agenda 2063, the UN Agenda 2030, and the AfDB High Fives (Hi5s) regarding gender equality.

UN Agenda 2030	Africa's Agenda 2063	AfDB High 5s 2025
An agenda for People, for the Planet, for Prosperity, for Peace and through Partnerships with a vision of transforming our World to leave no one behind and ensuring its transition to sustainable development	A considerable transformation across all three dimensions of sustainability including the governance, peace and security pillar Aspiration 6: An Africa whose development is people-driven, relying on the potential offered by African people, especially women and youth and caring for children	(H1) Light up and Power Africa (H2) Feed Africa (H3) Industrialise Africa (H4) Integrate Africa (H5) Improve Quality of Life for the People of Africa
SDG-5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls	Goal 17: Full gender equality in all spheres of life Gender parity in terms of access, representation and advancement is attained in all AU institutions and the RECs by 2030	H5 + cutting across High 5s Full gender equality and significant empowerment of African women is achieved by 2023 at the national, regional and continental levels

The targets related to SDG-5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) are listed in Box 1.

Box 1. UN Agenda 2030. Targets for SDG-5

- 5.1. End all forms of **discrimination** against all women and girls everywhere
- 5.2. Eliminate all forms of **violence** against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.3. Eliminate **all harmful practices**, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
- 5.4. Recognise and value **unpaid care and domestic work** through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
- 5.5. Ensure women's **full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership** at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- 5.6. Ensure **universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights** as agreed in accordance with the Program of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences
- 5.a. **Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources**, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws
- 5.b. Enhance the **use of enabling technology**, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women
- 5.c. Adopt and strengthen **sound policies and enforceable legislation** for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

African governments recognise women's rights to equal access to opportunities and services, and have adopted gender policies and various initiatives such as declaring 2010-2020 as the African Women's Decade; 2015 as the "Year of Women's Empowerment and Development towards Africa's Agenda 2063"; and 2016 as the "African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women". To attain goal 17, African countries would have to address the following priority areas and achieve the related targets (Box 2):

Box 2. AU Agenda 2063. Goal 17: Full gender equality in all spheres of life

Priority Areas for 2063	Targets
Empower women and girls and provide equal access and opportunity in all spheres of life.	1. Equal economic rights for women, including the rights to own and inherit property, sign a contract, register and manage a business and own and operate a bank account by 2025. 2. Ensure 90% of rural women have access to productive assets, including land, credit, inputs and financial services by 2030. 3. 50% of all elected officials at local, regional and national levels are women by 2030. 4. At least 50% of management positions in government and private sector are held by women by 2030.
End all forms of violence and discrimination (social, economic and political) against women and girls and ensure full enjoyment of all their human rights	1. Reduce to zero all acts of violence against women and girls in all settings (private, public as well as in conflict situations). 2. End all harmful social norms and customary practices against women and girls and those that promote violence and discrimination against women and girls by 2030. 3. Eliminate all barriers to quality education, health and social services for women and girls by 2020. 4. End all forms of political, social, economic, legal or administrative discrimination against women by 2020.

Nevertheless, the continent still scores lower than other regions in the world on the Gender Parity Index, and particularly in wage parity and access to economic empowerment and social protection. Despite the continent's ambitious policy frameworks and instruments, implementation has been slow. Differences between women and men are measured across economic opportunities, human development, law, and institutions.

4 Gender equality and inclusion in facts and figures

Inequalities in Africa between men and women are among the greatest in the world with African women and girls among the world's poorest, and with the highest rates of illiteracy. In sub-Saharan Africa, girls still face barriers to entering both primary and secondary schools. Important regional disparities between females and males regarding the average number of years of schooling, the wages, or the political representation have been underscored.

African women hold 66% of all jobs in the non-agricultural informal sector and only make 70 cents for each dollar made by men. Low participation of women in the formal labour sector and discrimination against female entrepreneurs, workers and managers negatively affects their productivity and results in large disparities in income between women and men. Only between 7-30% of all private firms have a female manager. The gender gap costs sub-Saharan Africa on average US$ 95 billion, which is equivalent to 6% of GDP, because women have lower participation in the paid labour force (UNDP, 2016).

4.1 SDG-5 and 2 – End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, and achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

African women are both economically active and highly entrepreneurial — as farmers, workers and entrepreneurs — more than anywhere else in the world (Fraser-Moleketi, AfDB, 2015). They form the core of the agricultural labour force (nearly 70%) (Figure 1) and produce the majority of Africa's food (about 90%). They dominate subsistence rainfed agriculture, which puts them more at risk with a changing and variable climate. Women work predominantly in low-paying occupations. They hold four of every ten jobs and earn on average 2/3 of the salary of their male colleagues. Women in farming and agribusiness often experience serious gender-related constraints – including in land ownership, inheritance rights, adequate time free from household duties, and access to inputs, finance and markets (AfDB, 2015).



Figure 1 – Women working in agricultural fields.

Existing national policies and regulations exclude women from benefiting equally from water and land resources, and access to finance and credit and other essential inputs such as fertilisers, new technologies and extension services (Parker *et al.*, 2016; Salo, 2013). The lack of finance remains the biggest constraint on women's business expansion. Access to financial services is held back by legal obstacles, cultural assumptions and common banking practices. Concerning access to land, there is discrimination in both formal laws and customary practices regarding ownership or control of land. Women represent just 15% of landholders. Their rights to inherit land are restricted, and they are vulnerable to dispossession on divorce or widowhood. Insecure land rights for women lead to underinvestment and to women's productivity being 30% lower than men's. More secure land rights can deliver both greater protection for women and greater incentive and opportunity to develop more productive agriculture.

Narrowing the gender gap in agricultural productivity can provide an important contribution to food security and to inclusive growth and can therefore reduce poverty.

4.2 SDG-5 and 6 – Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, and achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

In sub-Saharan Africa, women support the worst of Africa's infrastructure deficit – particularly power and water: 71% of the water collection burden and long hours spent each day collecting firewood and other biomass (15 to 17 hours/week, and a walking distance of about 10 km) (Figure 2). They are involved in water-related activities such as water conservation, water storage, domestic cleaning, crop production in both irrigated and rainfed agriculture, and preparation of food. Research across 15 countries showed that water supply projects designed and run with the full participation of women were more sustainable (Gross *et al.*, 2000). Women also have a lack of access to information and communication technology.



Figure 2 – Women and girls fetching water and firewood.

Human resources shortages are reported in sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, improving water efficiency, wastewater treatment and recycling and reuse technologies. Similar acute shortages of human resources are reported in the agricultural sector (irrigated farming and water conservation for rainfed farming). This shortage limits the countries' ability to achieve both water and food security goals in the face of climate change. When women have completed secondary education, incidence of diarrhoea would fall by 30% in low and lower middle-income countries (2013/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2014).

The stories and achievements of two women who are sanitation champions in the quest to deliver affordable and innovative sanitation services are presented below (BMGF, 2018).

Lungi Zuma, eThekwini Water & Sanitation, South Africa Mrs Zuma began her career in sanitation as an MSc Engineering candidate at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. She evaluated the characteristics of sludge from pit latrines and urine diversion toilets. She has since transitioned from academia to practitioner at eThekwini municipality and currently works in research, testing and evaluating innovative faecal sludge management (FSM) technologies.



Mme. Faye Lena Tall, Sanitation Entrepreneur, Senegal Most of Senegal cities are not equipped with sanitation systems and women are considered as responsible for the hygiene of the family homes. Mrs. Tall started her career as a commercial bank agent. Following the restructuring of the banking system and many layoffs, she decided to choose a new direction upon seeing the need and opportunity for sanitation management. In 2002, she started her own business, a company called "Delta", with 200 employees working in the communities of Dakar for low-cost pit latrines and septic tank emptying. In 2013, she created a firm called "Delvic Sanitation Initiatives" for faecal sludge management and then set up a private-public partnership with the National Sanitation Agency of Senegal (ONAS) to manage 4 faecal sludge management (FSM) treatment plants and to value faecal sludge through composting and the Omni Processor[1]



[1] The Omni Processor is revolutionizing the faecal sludge processing industry by combining solid fuel combustion, steam power generation, and water treatment. It treats faecal sludge by drying the wet sludge and turning some of it into ashes. It produces electricity and purified water, and kills all pathogens without emitting harmful emissions.

4.3 SDG-5 and 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, and achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Access to education is still a challenge in Africa, with the highest out-of-school children rate in the world, accounting for half of the 59 million primary-school-age children out of school in 2010 (UNESCO UIS, 2013). Universal primary enrolment is more

than 90% in most countries. Nearly half of African countries have achieved gender parity in primary school. Five years of schooling is, for some African girls, the most education they can expect. In the past decade, the enrolment rate of girls of all ages has been catching up to that of boys. However, the gender gap persists. Twenty-four percent of the primary school-age girls are out of school compared to 18% for boys (UNESCO UIS, 2018). In sub-Saharan Africa, girls still face barriers to entering both primary and secondary school and 12 million girls (as compared to 7 million boys) are never expected to attend school (UNESCO UIS, 2009). Poverty is the biggest barrier to a girl's education. In West and Central Africa, if a girl has not entered primary school by age 10, chances are that she never will. 27.1 million Illiterate females live in sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO UIS, 2013).

5 Regional disparities

According to Henao *et al.* (Sustainable Development Goal Center for Africa, 2017), despite primary and secondary girl enrolment having improved substantially, there are still major impediments for women on the continent, basically access to equal education and economic opportunities:

- Women receive on average 11 years of schooling in North Africa (12.7 for men), 8.6 years in West Africa (10.4 for men), 11.6 years in Southern Africa (12.2 for men) while the average in the world for females is 12.2 and for males is 12.4. In 2014, average years of schooling were 5.4 in Central Africa and 4.8 in East Africa, significantly less than the 9.7 years expected in sub-Saharan Africa.
- Men earn on average 3.6 times more than their female counterparts in North Africa, 1.6 time more in West Africa, 1.63 time more in Southern Africa (UNDP-HDI, 2015).
- Average share of parliamentary seats held by women in 2017 was as follows: 22.3% in North Africa, 14.6% in West Africa, 18.9% in Central Africa, 27.6% in East Africa, 25% in Southern Africa (World average of 23.7%, and sub-Saharan Africa's average of 24%) (World Bank data, 2017). The proportion of seats held by women in parliament was the highest in Rwanda in 2018 (61%; 64 seats) (World Bank, 2019).

There are significant differences in the values of the Human Development Index (HDI), the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Gender Inequality Index (GII) among and within the sub-regions. Data from the Africa Human Development Report 2016 (UNDP, 2016) are summarised below.

- With regard to the HDI[1], it was found that men are having a higher HDI value than women in all sub-regions. Women in East and Southern Africa have the highest achievements in terms of human development relative to men, followed

[1]The Human Development Index (HDI) is an average measure of basic human development achievements in a country (long and healthy life (life expectancy), access to knowledge (mean years of education and expected years of schooling) and a decent standard of living (gross national income per capita).

by North, Central and West Africa. Southern Africa has the highest female-to-male ratios (over 0.92), followed by East Africa (0.90).

- As to the GDI, which measures differences between male and female achievements in health, education and income, women in sub-Saharan Africa achieve, on average, 87% of male human development outcomes. The GDI of Central Africa (0.85) is slightly below the African average (0.87); women in Madagascar achieve up to 95% of the human development outcomes of men, while in Chad and in the Central African Republic, women attain only 77% of male achievements in education, health and income. The most significant variation between men and women is shown in the difference in income in all sub-regions, with North Africa having the most income inequality. However, there is gender parity in expected years of schooling in North Africa and the longest life expectancy at birth for both sexes among all the sub-regions.

- Concerning the GII, which measures gender inequalities in achievement in terms of reproductive health, education, political representation and labour market participation, the world GII value was 0.441 in 2017 (UNDP, 2018). The value for OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) countries was 0.186. Among developing regions, the GII value ranged from 0.270 for Europe and Central Asia, to 0.531 for the Arab States, to 0.569 in sub-Saharan Africa. It was around 0.53 for all Africa in 2015 and the target for 2025 is 0.4.

6 A story of progress in women's empowerment in former Ifriqiya – Tunisia

The story of the progress made in women's empowerment in Tunisia is presented as a case study to illustrate the long struggle Tunisian women went through to reduce inequality. This also happened with the support of the Head of the State, Habib Bourguiba, who took an effective step to eliminate inequality with the issuance of the Code of Personal Status in 1956. He ensured that the right laws and regulations, in support of women equality, were in place as well as means of implementation. The high level of women empowerment in Tunisia was reached in 2011 during the Tunisian uprise against dictatorship and corruption. Women had an effective participation in this uprise and demonstrations that led to the change of Government.

6.1 Legal and policy change in social, political and economic issues

Since independence in 1956, the constitution (1959) (recognising women as equals before the law), legislation and policies have evolved in ways that promote the principles of gender equality and eliminate gender-based discrimination in relation to health, education, labour conditions and political representation. The Code of Personal Status (1956) granted women equal rights in marriage and divorce, abolishing polygamy and repudiation, enacted a minimum age for marriage and ordered the consent of both spouses before marriage. Right to vote was obtained by women in 1957. Access to birth control was effective in 1962 and abortion was legalised by 1965. In 2008, Tunisia signed up to international commitments, including ratification of the

Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Social policy has resulted in important advances in health and education for women and girls, and in legal rights that shape gender equity (Gribaa *et al.*, 2009; Kautsch, 2009).

6.2 Concrete gains in women's empowerment

Some concrete gains in women's empowerment have been achieved regarding access to health and education services and the labour market (Chambers and Cummings, 2014):

- Maternal mortality halved from 130 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 56 in 2010.
- Fertility rates fell from 7.04 births per woman in 1960 to 2.2 in 2011 but a significant rural–urban disparity still remains with a total fertility rate of 2.6 and 1.5 respectively (Cochrane, 1995; Eltigani, 2009).
- An increase of girls' enrolment has been noticed at all levels of education since 1971 with primary reaching 100%, secondary from 38% to 94%, and tertiary from 6% to 45% (UNESCO, UIS, 2013).
- Gender gap has reversed with women's university-level enrolment rate in 2011 around 44.9% compared to 29.5% for men.
- There is a consistent rise of the school life expectancy for girls since early 1970s: from 4.9 years in 1971, to 9.3 years by 1990 and to 15.1 years by 2010. An increase from 11.3 to 14.3 years has been registered for boys over the same period.

6.3 Social outcome indicators

There are regional disparities in levels of education with the proportion of the labour force with no education in Grand Tunis being 3.7%, compared to 26.2% in Sidi Bouzid, 25% in El Kef, 21.7% in the northwest, and 21.5% in the mid-west (Boughzala and Hamdi, 2014). Women are increasingly in a paid employment in various professional positions as lawyers, doctors, dentists, pharmacists and veterinarians and biologists. However, in the last quarter of 2013, only 25.7% of women were active in the labour market against 74.3% of men. While the overall unemployment rate is 15.3%, it is only 12.8% for men in contrast with 21.9% for women. In addition, these rates are higher for university graduates with 31.9% unemployed (21.7% for men and 41.9% for women). There is a significant increase in the number of women in government. However, women remain underrepresented in executive roles both at central and regional levels. Moreover, the higher up in the hierarchy, the lower the proportion of women. In local governments, women represent only 10–20% of positions; in 2010, there were only five female municipal council presidents (Gribaa *et al.*, 2009; EU, 2010). Women's organisations are shaping social and political transformation.

6.4 Political voice and women's empowerment

A significant change has been noticed with time in a number of indicators as reported by UNESCO (2009), Gribaa *et al.* (2009); Goulding (2010) and Chambers and Cummings (2014). The vast majority of girls in Tunisia are now enrolled in secondary school with 94% in 2011 compared to 19% in 1980.

In public office in 2005, the percentage of female judges was 29%, i.e. 509 vs 1255 male judges. In parliament, a similar increase in the number of women elected was observed from 4% in 1989 to 31% in 2011.

6.5 Key drivers of change

According to Chambers and Cummings (2014), the key drivers of change have been the following:

- The nature of post-independence political dynamics and elite arrangements.
- The political leadership, which has consistently supported policies and reforms that favoured women's gender equality over a long period.
- A combined effect of policy and legal change in the socio-economic sphere (improved access to health, education and paid employment for women and girls).
- An emergence of women's political and social mobilization for change.

The principle of gender equality is embedded in the Tunisian Constitution of 2014 and quota on gender parity on party electoral lists were included in the law in 2011 to ensure that women represented at least 50% of the candidates elected to draft the constitution (Goulding, 2011).

6.6 The challenges ahead

There are a number of challenges ahead such as patriarchal social norms (in which gender-based discrimination persists in public and private life) and the role of religion in social and family life (Chambers and Cummings, 2014). There are also socio-political and institutional barriers. While marriage between a Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man is now permitted, equal inheritance for daughters – a concern which is not religious but economic – considered as key to Tunisian women's empowerment, will take time, commitment and education to become a law. Despite legislation on equality in employment, women's wages remain lower than men's in the private sector. Women's political participation remains limited and their presence in legislative and executive functions is still marginal.

7 Gender mainstreaming requires change

In order to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, a "nothing about them without them" approach should be adopted with meaningful and inclusive participation in decision-making and partnerships. Gender equality and inclusion should

be made a core business goal. Gender and inclusion analysis should be conducted at all levels. Equal access to and control of resources should be ensured.

The actions items that were agreed upon during a meeting held in Kigali, the 2016 POWWER Workshop, are quite relevant and worth mentioning (Water-First-Workshop-Summary, 2016):

1. **Educate public officials and policy makers.** There is a need to raise the awareness of public officials and policy makers on the central role played by women for green development and growth. National leaders must recognise that the talents, energy and expertise of both men and women are needed to address the complex challenges of development. More trained professionals are required. Gender-neutral approaches to recruitment and training for technical, social, service and legal careers in various fields are necessary, for all qualified citizens to participate and contribute equitably to their country's challenges.

2. **Empower women and girls to participate and lead.** Education of young girls must be prioritised. Young girls should be trained for various sectors careers, especially those in science and technology, and should be mentored to pursue leadership positions. More women should be empowered to pursue careers and career success, beginning with the encouragement of girls to enter science and technology fields. Women should be economically, legally and politically empowered to pursue and be successful in a wide range of leadership roles. This effort requires creation of laws, policies and social awareness programmes and will lead to an increase in women's access to and control over resources and services.

3. **Emulate best practices and role models.** Women should be actively recruited and promoted for leadership positions. They would provide new perspectives in regional and national development dialogues, and policy design and implementation. The next generation of women leaders needs access to successful practitioners and professional networks today. Both men and women in leadership and professional positions should be tapped to serve as mentors, role models and champions to ensure the retention and success of young women in their careers.

8 Conclusion

As stated in the Africa Human Development Report (UNDP, 2016), "if development is not engendered, it is endangered". It is therefore important that the Agenda for Action proposed in that report, with seven courses of action to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment, is implemented:

1. Adopt effective legislative and policy reforms for women's empowerment using gender equality as the organising policy lens for all development planning and implementation.

2. Develop capabilities and accountability to increase women's participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels of society.

3. Address the root causes of discriminatory health and education practices, breaking down harmful social norms and cultural barriers that impede gender equality.

4. Support equitable access to land, financial services, equal pay and equal employment for African women including establishing an African Women Investment Bank and opening Women Investment Windows in Development Banks.

5. Create more capable, socially responsive, equally representative and agile institutions that lead to a more equitable and inclusive society.

6. Pursue gender responsive analysis and development monitoring as well as more effective sharing of knowledge, tools and experiences across countries and regions.

7. Forge stronger alliances among all segments of society (public and private sector institutions, civil society organisations . . .) towards a common agenda for action to accelerate gender equality and women's empowerment.

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