



Panel discussion

Promoting positive gender norms in Africa: Effective approaches for development partners

10 March 2022

4:00 – 5:30 p.m. (Paris time)

In the context of the OECD's "March on Gender", the OECD Development Centre, Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD) and the Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC), invite you to a panel discussion on "*Promoting positive gender norms in Africa: Effective approaches for development partners*".

Objectives:

- Learn more about the role of development partners in addressing the underlying drivers of gender inequality in Africa and promoting transformative policy making and development programming
- Identify how development partners can be further engaged to accelerate social change, especially in terms of more and better financing for gender equality
- Propose policy actions and pathways to addressing persisting challenges faced by African girls and women, from a financing perspective

The panel discussion will draw on key findings from the *SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa* and the joint DCD/SWAC paper on "*Financing for gender equality in the Sahel and West Africa*" (*forthcoming*).

BACKGROUND

Countries in Africa continue to face significant challenges in addressing gender inequalities, with large differences between countries. These challenges are embedded in a larger context of multiple, interconnected crises (security, food, health), high poverty levels, political instability, and environmental concerns. The COVID-19 pandemic risks reversing hard-won progress on gender equality. In order to make progress, a range of tools and efforts are necessary that are all underpinned by financial investments. It is clear that efforts to address the root causes of gender inequalities and creating transformational change have not yet yielded enough results.

Promoting positive gender norms is at the heart of effective gender equality policy making and development programming aiming for transformative change. As evidenced in the Development Centre's [SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa](#), there is a range of underlying drivers that continue to hamper girls' and women's lives across various areas and throughout their life cycle. The report makes a strong case for governments and all relevant stakeholders to invest in gender equality through a social norms lens, as a key feature of post-COVID-19 recovery and to sustain inclusive growth over time. Indeed, discriminatory social norms and practices such as unpaid care work or women's limited decision-making in the household, also limit their engagement in the economic or political sphere. At the same time, traditional practices such as child marriage and biased perceptions of women's abilities and discriminatory educational norms tend to shape women's educational choices and outcomes.



Among the report's policy recommendations is the importance of a multi-level, multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder approach to address persisting challenges.

Central to this approach are sustainable, long-term financing investments supporting gender equality. Recent OECD analysis of financing for gender equality in the Sahel and West Africa, collected through the DAC Gender Equality Policy Marker, shows that levels of official development assistance (ODA) from members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) with gender equality objectives steadily increased over the past years, reaching USD 4.2 billion in 2018-19. This corresponds to 41% of ODA in the region. However, many opportunities exist for development partners to further boost efforts in tackling gender inequality. Key examples include **increasing the share of support focusing on gender equality** objectives even without increasing their overall level of ODA; **supporting local women's organisations as key actors** in reaching the most vulnerable; **further mainstreaming a gender equality perspective** across sectors as well as the humanitarian, development and peace nexus; and investing in the **evaluation of and learning** around gender-sensitive programmes as well as the generation of **gender-disaggregated data**. These examples, together with a focus on the quality of gender equality financing – ODA and beyond - could pave the way towards significant development gains in promoting positive gender norms across Africa.

Participants will include Members of the OECD and the Development Centre, policymakers, development practitioners, international and regional organisations, civil society, as well as representatives from the donor and philanthropy community.

Key resources:

- [The SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa](#)
- Financing for gender equality in the Sahel and West Africa (OECD, *forthcoming*)
- [Maps and Facts, Financing for gender equality in West Africa](#)
- [Development finance towards the elimination of gender-based violence](#) (OECD, 2021)

Social media:

- Follow us on Twitter: [@OECD_Centre](#), [@OECDdev](#), [@SWAC_OECD](#), [@Wikigender](#), using the hashtags [#BreakTheBias](#) [#SIGIAfrica](#)

Interpretation will be available in English and French.

DRAFT AGENDA

4:00 – 4:15

Opening remarks

- **Mr. Jeffrey Schlagenhauf**, Deputy Secretary-General, OECD

4:15 – 5:20

Panel discussion: *“Promoting positive gender norms in Africa: Effective approaches for development partners”*

This panel discussion will focus on the role of development partners in tackling persisting challenges faced by girls and women identified in the SIGI 2021 Regional Report for Africa. It will notably identify ways to engage development partners more effectively in providing solutions that will have a long-lasting impact on improving the lives of girls and women, particularly in the context of better financing for gender equality in Africa. Participants will exchange on what works and ways forward for transformative policy making.

Moderator: **Mr. Henri-Bernard Solignac-Lecomte**, Senior Communications Manager, OECD

Panellists:

- **Dr. Sintiki Tarfa Ugbe**, Director, Humanitarian and Social Affairs, ECOWAS
- **Ms. Marie Soulie**, Head of Gender, Education, Population and Youth, Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, France
- **Ms. Korotoumou Thera**, Executive Director for the NGO Femmes et Développement, Mali
- **Ms. Nathalie Gahunga**, Chief Gender Expert for West and Central Africa, African Development Bank

Open discussion / Q&A (25 min)

5:20-5:30

Closing remarks and way forward