



IN BRIEF



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

Photo: UN Women/ Eva Sibanda

What's the Issue?

Investing in women's economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, poverty eradication and inclusive growth.

Women make enormous contributions to economies, whether in business, on farms, as entrepreneurs or employees, or by doing unpaid care work at home. However, women's contributions are often invisible or undervalued as women are more likely to work as unpaid family workers in the agriculture sector; work or operate their businesses in the informal sector; or be fully engaged in unpaid care and domestic work. Additionally, women's unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities imply that women have less time available to work on income generating activities.

Particularly in Africa, closing the gender gap in access to: services, such as those from government or financial institutions; productive resources such as land or credit; local or international markets; opportunities earn wages or have gainful employment on terms equal to their male counterparts; would enhance the economic empowerment of women and young women resulting in significant gains in gender equality but also in national Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Our Solutions

UN Women works on various levels to strengthen women's economic empowerment. By supporting governments, regional bodies and civil society to develop and implement laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls. To make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stand behind women's equal

- Women in Africa spend 3.4 times more time on unpaid care and domestic work than men (ILO calls for urgent action to prevent looming global crisis, 28 June 2018)
- In 2019, women's unemployment rate in southern Africa was 29% and the lowest in east Africa with 3.8% (ILO - reporting on employment)
- A total of 89% of women in SSA are employed in the informal sector (UN Women, informal work)
- Globally women only make 77 cents for every dollar earned by men (UN Women)
- The share of women labour in crop production in most countries in SSA is at 40% (World Bank)

participation in all aspects of life. Ensuring income security, decent work and economic autonomy for women and girls.

Through regional and national interventions, UN Women aims to empower up to 2 million women to increase incomes, business leadership and resilience. The programme facilitates women's access to productive resources and business development services by addressing policy and regulatory barriers and promotes women's active participation in and benefit from agriculture, trade and climate mitigation programmes, while building women's and young women's agri-business and entrepreneurship skills; strengthening their access to financial services and markets; and working with governments to invest in services for women including those that reduce women's unpaid care and domestic work.



How We Make a Difference: Step by Step

Recent UN Women successes from around East and Southern Africa include:

Gender and Climate Change: promoting and supporting a just transition to the green and blue economy, including women's engagement in climate resilient agricultural value chains.

Agriculture is the biggest employer of women in rural Africa. UN Women's Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) is the biggest portfolio in women's economic empowerment in the region with 12 countries implementing programmes supporting rural women's access to land, finance, skills and technology to access green and blue markets. The CSA programme targets (young) women and their communities as well as policy makers at national and local levels, to support women's agency, influence and inclusion in sustainable farming, which contributes to securing local food supply, improved nutrition, increased incomes and secured livelihoods. Over the past 4 years, UN Women has reached almost 50,000 women in Sub-Saharan Africa through the CSA and related portfolios.

With an increased focus on climate change mitigation and adaptation throughout the world, it is estimated that over 24 million new jobs will be created in the green economy. UN Women is working with public and private sector partners to support women to have the skills and opportunities to be employable in the green economy jobs.

Through policy dialogue and advice UN Women supports Governments to integrate women and girls' needs in energy

CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE

In sub-Saharan Africa, women represent over half of the agricultural labour force. Their substantive contribution to agriculture and their vital role in ensuring family food security have been widely documented. However, gender-based inequalities in access to and control of productive and financial resources inhibit agricultural productivity and undermine resilience and sustainability efforts.

Dismantling structural constraints is crucial for reducing women's unpaid work burdens and raising the returns to their labour. This includes increasing women's access to labour and time-saving equipment and services; facilitating women's shift to high-value crops; improving women's access to non-labour agricultural inputs; and strengthening women's land rights

services and climate change and disaster risk reduction strategies and to remove barriers for women to access emerging green and blue jobs.

Gender and macroeconomic policies: supporting the development and implementation of macroeconomic policies and practices that advance gender equality and women's empowerment by working with ministries of economy, finance and international and development finance institutions.

No economic policy is gender neutral and every policy decision impacts women and men differently. UN Women works with relevant macrolevel planning ministries to analyze and understand the impact of macroeconomic policies. This includes developing evidence to support evidence-based policy making. Some examples of our policy level work include:

- Analysis of the fiscal response packages of COVID-19 developed in 3 countries and supported advocacy for inclusion of rural women and those working in the informal sector into the provisions.
- Support to the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat on the development of the Women in Trade Protocol through technical assistance and advisory support as well as through evidence creation.
- Gender and Economics capacity building of policy makers at regional and continental levels to expand the understanding of how the economic policy decisions impact gender equality on the ground.
- Working with Development Finance Institutions and International Finance Institutions as well as the financial sector broadly to strengthen investment in gender equality.
- Advocating for decent work and equal pay in the formal sector, and the expansion of the social protection systems to include women in the informal sector and those outside of the labour force.
- Promoting Gender Responsive Procurement to support women owned businesses and gender responsive businesses to gain a larger market share.

Ensuring women and girl's unpaid care and domestic work is recognized, redistributed and reduced as well as ensuring care workers are fairly remunerated and promoting their representation, at both policy and programmatic level.

With women in Africa spending more than 3 times the amount of time that men spend on unpaid care and domestic work,

women are often left with little time in their day to engage in income generating activities. While UN Women's research in the region has been highlighting the issue for several years, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted and exacerbated the disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work that women bear. UN Women is continuing to work with policy makers and civil society advocates to create African solutions to reducing women's unpaid care and domestic work. These include: identifying opportunities for government and development finance institutions to invest in services that will reduce women's unpaid care and domestic work; supporting private sector partners to invest in family friend workplace policies; and encouraging men to share unpaid care and domestic work responsibilities.



Gender and intraregional trade

Trade is a powerful tool for greater gender equality and women's economic empowerment, and the main driving force behind regional integration in the East and Horn of Africa. Youth are among the major stakeholders of intraregional trade and make up 177 million people in East Africa. In addition, women, particularly young women are, now more than ever, migrating to meet their economic needs. Gender mainstreaming strategies are therefore crucial in promoting inclusive outcomes for intraregional trade in Africa. Moreover, intraregional trade is central to the creation of employment

for women and young women to get higher wages and better working conditions. By expanding opportunities for productive employment and decent work, trade can facilitate the realization of (young) women's human rights and contribute to sustainable and equitable economic development and growth.

Women's economic empowerment boosts productivity increases economic diversification and income equality in addition to other positive development outcomes.

Intraregional trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is widely anticipated to address urgent socio-economic challenges and contributes to broad-based prosperity on the continent. Notwithstanding the promise, AfCFTA market liberalisation could also entrench multiple disadvantages that women and young women confront as a result of pre-existing inequalities in African economies. In this regard, UN Women works closely with the AfCFTA Secretariate, Regional Economic Communities and other UN agencies in providing research, regional online surveys, advocacy, and consultation on making AfCFTA work for (young) women and (young) women-led businesses. In terms of opportunities for women and young women's participation in the AfCFTA and identifying specific barriers and gender inequalities that (young) women face when accessing markets.

How we work

In 2022 UN Women ESARO will continue working to ensure that women are economically empowered on all levels, creating an environment where women and girls are safe, their

UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

In Africa, women spend 3.4 Times more in unpaid care and domestic work than their male counterparts.

Women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care and domestic work is contributed to by their responsibilities to fetch water and collect cooking fuel. With the increased incidences for climate events, women need to invest more time to meet the families' needs. For example, because of droughts women may need to walk further to fetch water exposing them to increased time poverty but also to increased risks of gender-based violence.

voices are heard and choices informed. On a regional level the WEE programme will work on the following initiatives through various interventions.

- Member States are held accountable for implementing GEWE commitments
- Regional actors strengthen policies, programmes and practices on gender equality which challenge gender stereotypes and promote positive social norms
- Women’s movements, networks and organizations use their voice, leadership and agency to hold duty bearers accountable for their commitments to GEWE
- Produce gender statistics and knowledge products to inform policy making, advocacy and accountability
- Ensuring that the UN System in the region is coordinated, and coherently and systematically contributing to progress on gender equality and empowerment of women and girls.

Leading through facilitation and collective strengths

Working with and through country offices, the regional office WEE programme assembles select partners and civil society organizations to better amplify women’s empowerment, agency and influence status. UN Women’s multi-pronged approaches include:

- Leading empirical research to better inform policy decisions at both micro and macro levels
- Working with policy makers to influence public policy and investments at national and municipal levels through gender responsive budgeting



Photo: UN Women/Bernie Khanyizira

Women farmers are increasing agricultural productivity using techniques learned from UN Women.

- Promoting a regulatory culture that recognizes women’s work and ensures decent working conditions for all
- Collaborating with technical agencies and private sector partners to invest in green and blue economy to contribute to rural women’s livelihoods security and resilience.
- Building capacity to implement gender responsive macro-economic policies
- Providing technical assistance to ensure state allocations and public procurement opportunities benefit women
- Building women’s agribusiness and entrepreneurship capacities and skills to strengthen their economic providing opportunities for organized women to move up the value chain.

PATH MODEL OF THE GENDER GAP IN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

